

THE SONG AT SUNRISE

by

WILLIAM
RUSSELL
:: OWEN ::



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The Song at Sunrise

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By

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To the
Princess of the Parsonage
who every day blithely walks the
Highway of Heaven
these Addresses are Dedicated

FOREWORD

THESE Addresses, delivered from time to time before congregations in the Southern States, represent an attempt to interpret the spirit and indicate something of the faith and fervour of the folk of the Southland. I am hopeful, moreover, that what follows may in some measure at least reflect the deep-seated reverence of a people of poetry and power, of child-like faith and tremendous conviction, who constitute one of the most profoundly religious constituencies to be found in all Christendom.

W. R. O.

MACON, GEORGIA.

Contents

I.	THE SONG AT SUNRISE	11
	<i>Exodus 14:24; 15:1, 2</i>	
II.	RAINGLESS CLOUDS	20
	<i>Jude, 12</i>	
III.	LIMPING TO GLORY	30
	<i>Genesis 32:31</i>	
IV.	THE HIGHWAY TO HEAVEN	38
	<i>Genesis 28:12</i>	
V.	THE IMPERATIVE OF POWER . . .	48
	<i>John 20:22</i>	
VI.	THE SPARROW'S SCAR	59
	<i>Matthew 10:29</i>	
VII.	THE MODERN MASTER	67
	<i>Acts 1:11</i>	
VIII.	THE PLENITUDE OF POWER	78
	<i>Luke 3:21</i>	
IX.	THE LYRIC OF OLD AGE	90
	<i>Psalms 23</i>	
X.	THE CONSECRATION OF CHANGE . .	105
	<i>Psalms 55:19; Proverbs 24:21</i>	
XI.	THE CHARM OF THE UNCHANGING .	115
	<i>I Corinthians 14:8</i>	

- XII. THE FORGOTTEN PRINCESS . . . 126
(For Mothers' Day)
Exodus 2:10
- XIII. THE HIDDEN HOST (Christmas Sermon) 135
Luke 2:13
- XIV. THE SURVIVAL OF THE UNSEEN . . . 145
(For the New Year)
Isaiah 49:16

I

THE SONG AT SUNRISE

*"In the morning watch * * * Moses sang * * *
the Lord is my strength and song."—EXODUS 14:24; 15:1-2.*

AFTER the midnight march, Moses sang a song of victory at the sunrise. Christianity is the gospel of sunrise; it always offers to sinning man the charm of a second chance, the opportunity of a new start. No world religion arraigns sin and failure quite as severely as Christianity; and yet, no system offers forgiveness as completely and fully. Christianity is the herald of hope to the disheartened, and offers a new benediction at every daybreak.

"Wail not for precious chances passed away,
Weep not for golden ages on the wane,
Each night I burn the records of the day,
At Sunrise every soul is born again."

Two million slaves trudged along over the weary ground for seven days, marching at midnight out of Egypt with a blind faith in God's chosen man, Moses. A cloud flashed light before them at the midnight hour, and thus they marched in the cool of the night; but in the light furnished by God.

Pharaoh followed in the darkness which trailed the escaping Children of Israel, and headlong and violently the Egyptians rushed into the soft waterbeds of the Red Sea, and their chariots stalled and sunk and the midnight brought confusion and the resurging waters buried them deep in the bottom of the sepulchre of the sea. And "at the morning watch, Moses sang, The Lord is my strength and song."

They had passed through the midnight to the morning; through the darkness to daybreak; one week before they had been slaves, but the song at sunrise marked out a new destiny and henceforth they were to be a Kingdom of Saints.

THE MARCH AT MIDNIGHT

The midnight was trying. During the day sunlight was everywhere, and they rested and slept and the scattering herds grazed in waddy and in glen; but at the evening tide the summons came to march, to flee before the pursuing Pharaoh. The cloud gave them light, but where the cloud closed the midnight fell like a pall, ominous and threatening. And that seems to be the way our God leads His marches. Jonah, disobedient and intransigent, fled at right angles to the way of God, and after the midnight's chastening, "the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time."

The vessel marred in the hands of the potter was set aside—in a corner obscure, forgotten by

night and by day, useless, discarded and castaway. But a fresh thrusting in the waters for softening, a new brushing against emery wheels, and a second burning in the furnace, brought out the vessel, "a new vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make it over again."

John Mark turned away into a midnight march when he left his missionary quest at Pamphylia, but a second chance came when Paul summoned him back to a morning song.

God sets our journeys through the midnight oftentimes, to make our lives to be more useful. Israel's pilgrims were learning that they were a nation petted and chosen by Jehovah, but His preparatory tutelage was to make them a useful nation to perpetuate His glory in the kingdoms of the world. As slaves they were useless, as a separated people they were to be the mightiest nation in all history to teach the righteousness of their Deliverer. We were not born to use the bounties of God always, but we were born to be used of a gracious Saviour.

Too often the soul wanders, helpless in its midnight. Aimless, despairing and sinful the darkness falls over the spirit. A secret sin has wrapped its garments of gloom about a truant disciple and it is night to him—the Red Sea and enemies and the cloud behind—leave us useless and discouraged, but suppliant.

It is not often the environment alone that defeats

us, it is the faithless, sinning heart within. Not difficult Nineveh offered the barrier, but Jonah's heart was wrong; not the clay or the poor skill of the potter, but the rift in the vessel's walls rendered it useless and unused. John Mark's weakness was the sin that made him turn from his task.

A storm is lashing its angry, rolling waves into the craggy coast of Scotland's northern harbours, and a quivering boat feels her way through the jutting rocks to find a harbour. It is midnight, and "the mad sea shows her teeth that night; she curls her lips and shows her teeth as if to bite," and the helmsman prays, and the brave captain turns the tiller with delicate touch and anchours in the darkness, not knowing whither; but the sunrise showed the story and the security and song of the safe voyage through a peculiarly dangerous and narrow passageway, and looking out upon the calm at the morning watch, the sea captain cried, "Did we, did we come through that?" "The Lord is our strength and song."

"The night is dark, but God, my God,
Is here and in command;
And sure I am when daylight breaks,
I shall be at the land.
And since I know the darkness is
To Him as sunniest day,
I'll cast the anchor,—patient—out
And wish—but wait for day."

THE MINOR MUSIC OF THE SEA

How strangely was the passage through the sea, accompanied each step by the glory of God. Je-

hovah was remaking a nation now. See them lean upon his powers to carry through the trembling walls of water. The sinking sands reminded them of the strength beneath their feet to hold them up.

Jonah within the fish, found the solace of a new and simple trust. John Mark, tested, found a humble faith that sought the trail of service again where it had been abandoned. Jeremiah tells the tragic story of the potter softening the clay, breaking the unused vessel anew, reshaping its pliant stuff with a reverent hand, blistering away with the emery wheel each rough and rude angle that marred the new vessel, and burning it with fire, fixing its body to transport water, to harbour a growing flower, to serve as a container of the olive's oil; "making it over a new vessel, as it seemed best to the potter to make it."

I know why the Red Sea and the minor music and the toilsome passage over crumbling watery sands, come to us; they teach us that having been driven to trust God in the testing hour, we come out never to trust ourselves again.

Never a human life is finished until it ends at the grave, but all the time our lives are being made. We are passed through the deep waters to give our faces a softness that only the background of a chastened soul can serve to show. The wheels whirl apace to grind away the asperities of temper, and dull the edge of our sharp words, and swiftly revolve for the burnishing of selfish and unworthy

ambitions to glisten in the rededication of a forgotten self. Life is all a process, and the trying times are the best of all the experiences of the soul to fit us to sing the song when we walk out upon the shores of the new day, and greet the sunrise.

Monica, that marvelous mother of Augustine, shed tears over the wayward sins of her son until her eyes were rivers of water. But with a concubine at sixteen years of age, and his illegitimate son, Adeodatus, to fix Augustine's feet in the quicksands of hopeless and dissolute youth, his mother's prayers sang their song in the midnight ever about Heaven's throne. And having heard Ambrose, the great preacher, Saint Augustine cries out in his confessions: "Thus was I sick at heart and in torment, accusing myself more bitterly than ever, tossing and turning in the frail bond that still held me until it should break asunder; frail it was, yet it held me still. I flung myself beneath a fig tree and gave rein to my tears; and the flood burst forth from my eyes, an acceptable sacrifice to Thee. And many things I said to Thee in this sense, though not in words. 'And Thou, Lord, how long wilt Thou delay? Wilt Thou be angry forever, Lord? How long? How long? To-morrow, and to-morrow? Why not now? Why not end my baseness this very hour?' I grasped and opened the sacred volume, for a voice as it were of a boy or girl singing many times: 'Take up and read, take up and read,' roused me to read the words, 'not in rioting

and drunkenness—not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh and the lusts thereof.’ I neither wished nor needed to read more. For with the close of this sentence, the darkness of my doubt melted away.”

Through the Red Sea of Youth, guided by the cloud of Monica’s prayers, Augustine had come to the Song at Sunrise. A new beginning, a second chance, for at Augustine’s baptism by Ambrose tradition says first was sung the noble “Te Deum Laudamus”—“We Praise Thee, O Lord,”—my strength and my song.

THE MELODY OF THE MORNING

Looking back on the quiet waters, midnight gone, Moses and Israel safely kept, he greeted the sunrise with a song of a people having found a new freedom and a divine destiny. The Lord from that time forward, would be their strength and song. Israel had been baptized in the bounding walls of the sea, but they had come out born again; Jonah proven by Jehovah, rose a mighty prophet to Nineveh; the vessel broken attained a double beauty; John Mark rejected, was to be a partner of Paul’s greatest travels.

A Christmas shower of Santa Claus’ bounties, brought to my older brother, years and years ago, a gaudily decorated magic lantern; and soon we were invited by a good old German deacon to visit

his home for an exhibition. The sheet was hung for a curtain, and the petroleum lamp lighted, and the still life pictures were projected. It was a tame exhibit when we remember the marvels of the modern cinema, but the ending of the show came in a great tragedy; for behold, the lantern encircled by leaping flames, was afire. Presence of mind by the genial host, swept the burning wreck into a pail of water, and the gloom of failure filled our boyhood hearts. But a few weeks brought another invitation to the same home to see a new exhibition, and there on the marble-top table, arrayed in a veiling of white, was an object of curious scrutiny to our eager eyes. The veil was drawn, and wonder of wonders, there was my brother's lantern in a dress of flaming red paint with golden designs of decoration, and written across its paneled door was the word "Phoenix," out of the fire! My brother's magic lantern had been made over again. The second chance was a challenge to the magician's art; out of the fire had come the Phoenix; out from the waste the wings of the fabulous bird had lifted a new creation, and the tuneless chords of boyhood's disappointment had broken into a new melody, and in the morning watch we sang our song.

Jesus, the great remaker of bruised hearts, sets a new light in the soul at every morning watch, and casts new garments of glory over the broken bodies of men. Every sunrise offers to men discouraged, a new opportunity; every day heals the scars of

yesterday, and bids the pilgrim to start afresh. Every daybreak sings the song of a new beginning.

At the morning watch Moses sang, "The Lord is my strength and my song."

II

RAINLESS CLOUDS

"They are clouds without water."—JUDE 12.

THERE is nothing so tantalizing as the threat of an indolent cloud; ever promising, but never falling; always threatening, but sending no showers; floating with a lazy indolence against the sky. Jude uses the waterless clouds as a figure to describe the fruitless indifference of the saints of the church; they were great in their espousals of empty doctrines, and profitless professions, and Christless creeds; but never refreshing with the falling rain, and creating no balmy atmosphere by the scattering of good deeds and gentle works among the children of the world.

Just away from the farmer's cottage door there stretches on in radiant splendour the rows and rows of blossoming orchards of the peach and pecan, mingling their mantles of glory purpled and tinted with white. But the farmer now is observing the clouds, hanging by invisible threads, threatening their water, but ever disappointing. The leaves are crumpled and withering, the dust of the red soil caught in rolling gusts of wind, but the indolent

clouds remain uncondensed. But how wonderful is the rain and the imminent showers which sometimes fall, and then the clouds become the harbingers of the ripening fruit! The last gasp of the hot breath of the rainless orchard sweeps before the coming storm into the fruit-gatherer's face, the bad spirit of the dry drought chokes him while the freshening winds release the strangling fingers of the departing heat-laden atmosphere and the clouds begin to drop their rain, and the scent of the fragrant blossoms fill the air, and the dry earth is moist, and the roots are drenched, and the rainless clouds have fulfilled their promise to the parching peachtrees and another miracle of a storm has brought its benedictions to the earth.

And our lives are like the clouds. Such a harvest awaits willing hands, and so many stifling slums watch eagerly for wealthy philanthropies, and the blight of drought which shrivels the souls of men patiently welcomes the busy ministry of useful lives to sweeten and refresh and transform the world by miracles of grace and goodness.

THE DISASTER OF DROUGHT

Nothing is so blighting to the tiller of the soil as the withholden rain and the consequent disaster of the drought. The panting sheep roaming the plains, and gasping for breath; the lowing cattle seeking the shrinking stream; the hot-sanded country lanes; and withering leaves and stunted fruits

—all creation is groaning in the travail of the rainless clouds and threatening showers and the blighting heat. Out on the prairies I saw a dwindling stream running its fugitive flight through the sweet grass and clover beds—a perennial supply to the luxuriant border of green on its either side, and here were two water oaks, one flourishing as a “tree planted by the rivers of water,” and the other tree uprooted by a rough wind and leaning like an aged man upon the virile branches of its companion tree, but still half green and still half rooted, pressing its hungry roots into the bosom of the running brook. Clouds somewhere had descended and had trickled down the hills and penetrated the plains and had prevented the drought. Oftentimes, when a tree is dependent upon the clouds to water its roots, the botanist discovers a strange thin ring in the growth of the wood and the indelible finger of the drought has left its mark.

But the careers of men too, hang like clouds, offering promise but never fulfilling. Which one of us does not recall the brilliant student of college or university, whose talents, like the clouds, gave prophecy of a luxuriant life! What a charm of high intelligence did this youth show to his classmates, what mighty success was expected from his flattering abilities; but indifference or disinterest, or lazy effort, stimulated all the time the threat of fruitfulness or success, only to tantalize with its

unfulfillment; like a rainless cloud, his career was the threat of indolence.

In the realm of home and church oftentimes a sweet and gentle life has caught the voice of God that called to duties and fields of endeavour far and away beyond the compass of the common place. "She has offered herself for China and its Religious Renaissance." We have often said of this Mary, sitting at the feet of Jesus, only to witness the resurge of the enthusiasm, only to see the soil grow dry and the life to dwindle and the care of the world and the hot light of the social glamour to cast upon this girl of promise the shadow of a rainless cloud, and with threatening indolence the world goes on unblessed and the hoped for benedictions are silent and unsaid in the disaster of another life's deceiving drought.

How much of loving usefulness and sweet ministry did the Christian Hospital promise to a sick and wretched humanity until the mean hand of the mercenary healer drove out with the scourge of rushes the Spirit of Jesus the Great Physician in His unselfish and unrewarded healing of the hurts of the body. Like a rainless cloud the hospital may stand; ever promising its abundant benediction to body and soul, but through the miser's greed, or the charlatan's quest for patients ill of body and ignorant of guile, they stand as rainless clouds.

The French Physician of the Children's Hospital rebuked that Christian nurse when she said, "I

pray for them each as my own." His big rough hands and facile knife declared, "All very well, but the good Lord Jesus has had His Day," and hers was the reply:

"Had? Has it come? It has only dawned. It will come
by and by,
Oh, how could I serve in the wards, if the hope of the
world were a lie?
How could I bear with the sights and the loathesome smell
of disease,
But that He said, "Ye do it to me, when ye do it to
these."

THE SACRAMENT OF THE STORM

Christianity builds its program upon the principle of the falling showers, from the cloud that loses itself in refreshing rain, and the heavens yielding their bounty to a thirsty soil. What wonders are wrought through the magic of a great drenching storm; the soil is softened, the furrow turned and the seed wooed into life; the streams are swollen and the race to the mill is made the swifter and the grinding stones whirl and wheel and the wheat is ground and hungry mouths in the city slums are fed. Chubby hands reach out from the dingy cubicle of the hot tenement for the nourishing milk come from the luxuriant pasture which the storm has rendered lush and green; the venders on the streets crying the fresh fruit and the riches of the forest and farm, all of them, are summoned to busy benedictions and sweet charities by the miracle of the storm that has swept the earth.

The toiler walks over his fields and orchards and

ranch when the threatening clouds are fallen. A sense of reverence deep and sublime, claims his loftiest worship for a moment, the growing grain pulses, the orchards fairly bloom anew with added charm of colour and the grass mellows into sweetness. The storm and the farmer and Jehovah have a common sacrament to supply the rich man's bread line with its daily food. Neither heat nor cold, nor sun nor "gloom of night," hinders the storm and the toiler and his Heavenly Father from the abundance of the world's daily provision. An humble prayer for the storm and the yielding clouds and the giving God, links the orchard grower and the wheat gleaner and the ranchman in a sacred fellowship with the God of the falling rain.

"Back of the loaf is the snowy flour,
And back of the flour the mill;
And back of the mill is the wheat and the shower,
And the sun and the Father's will."

Andrew Carnegie, with a romance of success that reaches from the heather beds of native Scotland to the steel rails of his busy mills, all the while stood in the peril of the threatening cloud, but when old age had taught its wisdom and the Carnegie pensions had fallen like showers upon the dreaded old age of his pensioners, and stately libraries had sprung up with their blessings in a thousand villages, then the sacrament of the yielding clouds and the scattering showers had discovered worship in the distribution of wealth.

The crude oil flowing through the miles of pipe lines suddenly flashes into the festival of lights above the student at his desk, the matron at her task and the city mantled in the dusk of the night. The gathering clouds of the indolent wealth fall in gentle benefaction and the program of Christianity finds its fulfillment in its usefulness to toiling men. For the threatening clouds of a man's life find their strength when they fall. Jesus taught that he serves best who thinks least of himself; the sacredness of service gains by giving, lifts by losing, becomes strong through stooping, blesses by bending and finds itself supreme at the moment of sacrifice. One's life is discovered to be most useful when it yields its deeds of love and mercy.

THE RAINBOW AND THE REWARD

The fallen shower, and the drenching storm and the sun's reappearing and the rainbow write the entire drama of the faith which mankind has in God. We build our faith upon the promises of a providing Father, and the descending rain and the fulfillment of hope in the growing seed is the guarantee that His loving care has not forgotten and the arching rainbow is the sign flung upon the heavens that His mercy changeth not through the years and years. Threatening clouds, and waters filling the earth with swollen streams and the process of the ascending vapour under the wooing of the genial sun, puts again in the sky the never ceasing

clouds and God and man walk along together in a divine fellowship of common toil.

Raincloud and brook, and brook and raincloud again, is ever the cycle in which moves the way of God. Storm and rainbow, drought and harvest, so runs the fulfillment of man's faith in his Creator. The dry fields and panting herds and withering blooms test the trusting natures of men who walk by faith, but never once has God disappointed the patient farmer who waited his provision; the rainbow in the sky is the unfailing sign that God and man have a work to do as old as the hills and as everlasting as the rocks and the running streams.

The forms of nature change; sometimes a cloud with threatening indolence withholding its charm of shower now falls and through the circuit of capillaries the orchards breathe out again the rain transformed into the invisible balmy summer air. Nothing is really new, but the habiliments of gray duty or of golden grandeur often change, and man goes to the grave having come from God and the opening sepulchres reveal to the heavens the fulfilled promises of the risen bodies of the saints of God. The strange heavenly life of God enters into the human soul and processes of change come upon the heart and mind and the will of men and the glory of a kinship divine breaks out in the new-born life and takes the form of splendid service and teeming magnitudes of good deeds and kind acts proclaim

again the miracle of the man changed and fashioned in the likeness of his Creator, the soul is born again and the rainless cloud has fallen and the rainbow triumphs like an arch upon the sky.

Lord Tennyson tells the story of the continuity of service and the passing of the spirit of consecration from king to his subject in the dying of King Arthur, wounded, betrayed, panting to his death in the ruins of the chapel doorway. He calls to Bedivere, his faithful knight, and gives into his hand Excalibur, the sword which had been given him by the wondrous hand that rose out of the sea, and commanded that Bedivere cast it back into the loch. But when Bedivere had seen the hilt "twinkling with diamond sparks, and myriads of topaz lights, in subtlest jewelry," he hid the sword in the rushes and returned to Arthur.

"Hast performed my mission which I gave?" asked the King. "What didst thou see?" And Bedivere answered, "I heard the ripple washing in the reeds and the water lapping on the crag."

"Go again," said Arthur, "and cast the sword."

But once again Bedivere thought of the generations that would like to behold the wonder sword of King Arthur, he again hid Excalibur among the rocks and returned.

"What didst thou see?" said the King. "I heard the water lapping on the crag and the long ripple washing in the reeds."

And the dying and weakening king, angered,

flashed his last command, "Miserable and unkind, untrue, traitor-hearted, if thou spare to fling Excalibur, I will rise and slay thee with my hands."

And Bedivere, summoning his best self with a mighty renunciation for his King, "wheeled and threw the sword, which made lightning in the splendour of the moon, and whirled in an arch like a streamer of northern lights," and returning to the King, he told the vision he had seen.

Bedivere had taken up the task of the King. The King was dead; long live the King. The Church rises and falls only to reappear a thousand times the greater blessing to mankind. The cloud descends only to reascend, the life of God enters the souls of men to flash out again in glorious deeds and songs of melody and consecrations and renunciations and unrestrained surrenders, to find through the paths of useful services a new highway back to the bosom of God.

III

LIMPING TO GLORY

"As the sun rose upon him, he halted on his thigh."—
GENESIS 32:31.

OF course this is a picture of reconverted Jacob, limping on to Glory. Never again after he was touched by the wrestler at midnight did Jacob cease to halt on his thigh. His was a broken life, begun in a petty theft of his brother's birthright, and closed in the tomb of Abraham and Isaac and his beloved Rachel—but the journey was a limp all the way.

Exiled and guilty, and maybe contrite of heart, Jacob had seen the glory of heaven thrusting down its ladders in his dream. Fourteen years labouring as a shepherd, he had gathered wealth and had nearly stifled his conscience still uncleansed of Esau's wrong. And now he is rallying his cowardly self to return home and face it all and maybe outwit Esau into a compromised treaty of peace, and Jacob discovers, strangely enough, that whenever a man begins to right his wrongs, the first skirmish is always with himself. So the wrestling angel appears and goes to grips with Jacob and drags him away to loneliness and solitude and sorrow and himself. And the battle is cast! Jacob

and his challenging visitant fight it through till the daybreak. Safety for himself, Jacob for the moment has forgotten. Hope for Esau's easy forgiveness is dismissed in the tragedy of a great repentance, and a new passion seizes Jacob to find the name and the deity of this wrestler that strangles his words, and throttles his songs, and beats blue his body and finally touches his thigh and leaves him crippled and panting in the shadows of the fleeing dawn, and says our text, "as the sun rose upon him, he halted upon his thigh." Jacob is left with a limp. He was transformed, transfigured and triumphant but doomed to limp on to glory. He had fled away a deceiver, he is returning touched with the Divine, he had left Esau a pretender, in the morning aftermath of battle, he stands a prince; failure had fruited into faith at last, but Jacob halted upon his thigh—limping in the glory of the early morning sunrise.

THE TRAILING LIMB

There is no need to argue with any normal man that the human race wends its way to the city of God upon a halting thigh. Heaven has touched us all in our divinest moments and a struggle ensued; some of us took by violence the Kingdom of God; others failed; but whether saint or sinner, every man is marked with the human limp. Let him rise to heroic deeds in war and he drags his bloodthirsty sword over the field of glory. If he sings the son-

nets that seem to have winged their flight from the harps of heaven, some bad moment in the poet's life crashes him to earth with a broken wing, dust-soiled and bruised. Man born from heaven forever scents the hounds of hell, a creature of light, he persists in walking in the darkness, made to mount up as an eagle he goes limping on to glory.

In a volume of fiction which appeared a few years ago there was told the strange story of a wild recluse who sought the woods for his home, and in the huntsman's and trapper's life which he was compelled to live by chance he found a wildcat caught in a trap. He released the wildcat from its misery to discover a broken leg and a trailing limb. With mute appreciation of its liberator, the wildcat ever followed the steps of the wildman of the woods. But deftly and strikingly does the author weave into his story each movement of the wildcat as the companion of the "trailing limb." Healed was the leg, but hampered; cured, but crippled; mended, but marred.

Witness Moloch rallying the defeated hosts lately fallen from heaven. He summons them to arouse their better self and win back their heavenly habitation; a call to them to limp on back to glory!

"In our proper motion we ascend
Up to our native seat, Descent and fall
To us is adverse. Who but felt of late,
When the fierce foe hung on our broken rear
Insulting, and pursued us through the deep,
With what compulsion and laborious flight
We sunk thus low? The ascent is easy then."

So the race of man limps to glory in the sharp contention between Satan and the Saviour, between sin and salvation, out of the mire to the music of heaven.

Sin is as pitiless as poison; insidious as disease, and ruins like rot; hates and hardens and hisses and hurts and hurls down to a heartless hell; scoffs and scorns and satires and laughs and leers and lures and lances and knives and kills and damns and dooms and leaves man despairing and desolate, destitute and dead.

But Grace saves and seals and sanctifies and separates and makes superior; consecrates, cleanses, changes, cures and crowns with the coronet of a king; makes a pauper a prince, a prodigal a priest, and a castaway a queen.

Grace sings a song when we sink; shouts a hallelujah when we die, sweeps us in a golden chariot beyond the farthest stars through the gates of pearl, clothes us in robes of white, puts a crown on our head and sets man to stand before the throne of God a sinner saved and redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus, with all the capacities of the sons of heaven.

THE TRIUMPH OF THE WOUNDED

Even wounded, Jacob limped back to his brother and home and happiness. Left alone, man walks with his wounds on the level at best; finally discovering his path descending to ruin and wretched-

ness and loss. But our evangel is the good news of the transforming life of Christ seizing the soul, glorifying the human into a nature akin to God—divine and undefeatable. Jacob's is the old story of the new nature and the soul's new birth. The halting thigh is but a broken wheel of the human machine that sweeps on to glory as the chariot of the soul. Let man and God face each other at some midnight, in the flare of a blazing passion or in the miseracordia of a contrite heart, let the divine but touch him and man experiences the sun to rise upon him from the heights of glory and he limps on. Limping, halting, humanity, supported by the imperishable life of God born in the soul through experience, and tears and faith and yielding to the wrestling God, finds no heights unconquerable, no task over which he cannot triumph, no withering wound that can hinder his walking the streets of God.

Sam Hadley, the wreckage of a waste heap in the obscure alley of the big city, hears the voice of the evangelist, and in a tragic moment he wrestles with the midnight angel and the finger of his terrible habit of drink has touched for life his thigh to make it halt, the memory of the conquered habit remains as a pricking thistle deep in his heart, but Hadley has rescued his soul touched by the wrestler like unto the Saviour of Men and he limps into the glory of the Water Street ministry, reaching out with strong arms to lift and love the fallen and

broken bums of his city back to the ascent to heaven. Often, he testified, he would rise out of bed, during the most profitable years of his ministry to follow the lure of the habit of drink—seeking in his disturbed sleep the closet where he had before hidden his flask and his cup. He often awoke in the act to find only the empty closet and the stingless habit and the halting thigh, limping to glory—changed and at the same time chained, fettered and free, a Prince with a limp.

The mystery of this change in nature is a miracle. See the heap of coal dust black and dire. But the magic finger of the chemist calls out from the waste of dust, violet and indigo and blue and green and yellow and orange and red, and a rainbow of colour like a halo, crowns the coal dust with glory; once again the chemist's wand calls for aspirin and phenacetin and laxatives to leap into the healing medicine chests of men, and a sweet perfume of orange blossoms rises from the smoking oven and fills the air, while that great Magician of Time crumples the coal heap in his hand and presses it by avalanche and glacier into a hard pebble of white stone, and when the centuries are ready God opens His hand and the imprisoned sunlight flashes out of the polished facets of a pure diamond to charm the eye of man. Marvelous miracle of the coal heap, and of the sooted soul! Touched, transfigured, transformed, the lagging leg goes on limping to glory.

GETTING HOME WITHOUT THE LIMP

Fifty years longer was Jacob to limp. Then came Egypt and Joseph and the bedside benediction to his twelve sons, and sighing unto death the old patriarch asked that they bury him in Machpelah, beside his beloved Rachel. At last the halting thigh has reached its home where all weariness and limping cease, and thighs never halt.

A halting thigh in glory puts on the immortal and incorruptible and the limpleless.

The persistent disciples, pilgrims, halting, maimed, and limping, go on to glory from strength to strength. Passing through the valley of weeping, they make it a well. The glory of the celestial is the divine far-off event that casts the garments of forgetfulness over the human limp. Cease not, oh man, to get your eyes on the spires of the new Jerusalem, their shining heights lure us out of the lagging pace, the disconcerting drag, the human ills, the weakening wounds, the tethering trials and hindering sins, which keep mortal men ever limping! The righteous man keeps heaven in view, but limps on to its happiness.

Out of Doubting Castle, Christian and Hopeful beaten, stripped and wounded come to the river which is the river of death—wearied of the journey, halting upon the thigh.

Bunyan skilfully portrays the limping soul even in sight of the City of God, for he says: "The reflection of the sun upon the city was so extremely

glorious they could not as yet with open face behold it." Human nature drags on when in sight of its glory to find at last the struggle through the waters, and the voice of Hopeful cheering Christian on cries, "Brother, I see the gate and men standing by to receive us." But Christian answers, "It is you, it is you they wait for; you have been hopeful since I knew you."

"Then," says the writer of *Pilgrim's Progress*, "I saw in my dream that Christian was in a muse a while. To whom also Hopeful added this word, 'Be of good cheer, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole!'" And with that Christian broke out with a loud voice, "Oh! I see him again; and he tells me, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee!'" Then they both took courage and the enemy was after that as *still as a stone* until they had gone over. Now upon the bank of the river on the other side they saw the Two Shining men again—and a mighty hill, but the pilgrims went up the hill with ease because they had these two men to lead them up by the arms.

On the other side of Jordan, instead of limping, they were leaping; the halting thigh had at last scaled the heights of heaven and the gray morning had broken into golden glory.

IV

THE HIGHWAY TO HEAVEN

"Behold the angels of God, ascending and descending."—
GENESIS 28:12.

JACOB was a lonely wanderer from his home. He had stealthily stolen his brother Esau's birthright and slipped away among the hills, barely out of sight of the black tents of Isaac. And in his weariness he watched the sun go down and Jacob groped out after God. That is always the first impulse to all prayers—the setting of the sun. When the night-times of life gather over man, our human hearts turn to heaven. The dream brought him a vision of a staircase leading to heaven, for that is what the original text means. Out of his piteous need the conscience-stricken Jacob sought for a highway to heaven, and found it in the vision of a staircase whereupon the angels of God were ascending and descending.

The highway over which man makes his way from earth to heaven is precisely the same over which heaven makes its way to earth—it is none other than the highway of prayer. God prays to man quite as truly as man prays to God. The angels descend, as, indeed, they ascend. Prayer is

not merely speaking to God; it is equally true that prayer is God speaking to us. Prayer is not only petition, it is also Divine response. When man prays he closes his eyes, and maybe lifts his hands to the skies, but he who prays truly closes all of the soul's windows, draws in the lattice, and shuts out every earthly thing. Prayer is the lifting of the soul's far-seeing eyes to discern along the highway which leads to heaven. Whether the eyes are closed, or the hands outstretched or the body bowed, only one thing is needful to travel heaven's highway—Jacob must kneel with beauteous contrition, with quiet, simple faith, and a sacred song of victory on his lips. The soul must bow its head upon the cloth of gold that stretches—and not so far away—until it reaches the throne of heaven. This is the highway over which man makes his way to heaven, and heaven accompanied by the very angels of God, returns with a wise response to each petition, a plenteous fellowship to each homesick cry, and a charge to set loose in this world of ours those many potentialities that our prayers set to moving about heaven's throne. No soul travels over the highway to heaven to return alone. We pray to heaven—heaven prays to us. This is the fellowship of prayer.

Mysticism is the one word among us that is most scandalized. It needs not be so. We have thought the mystic one whose mind is vague, whose heart's cravings are feverish and who is turned quite

easily by a wind-blown will. Mysticism is—in its simplest and most practical meaning—the habit of prayer. The mystic walks thitherward and hitherward over the highways of heaven. Angels ascend and descend for the man who prays.

Effective prayer is not simply the going into a closet and falling upon human knees, and counting beads, and saying words and beating breasts; it is the converging of all the experiences of the soul toward God, while the ever-present consciousness of a divine response gives the eternal hope of victory to him who prays. The mystic is always on the highway to heaven, maybe forwards, maybe returning. In every hour of the day and in the conscious meditation of the night-time, the mystic either stands at the earth-base of the highway, wends his way to its summit, or flushed with a new sense of fellowship with God, turns earthward again. “Prayer without ceasing,” is the attitude.

HEAVEN BEGINS WHERE EARTH LEAVES OFF

Jacob's head found a stone as a resting place, but the lonely youth discovered the ladder to heaven started its lowest rungs where his troubled head lay on the earth. All of our prayers have their genesis in human need. The angels ascend first. This is the cry of an orphaned heart. One may travel ever whither, and he always finds man, and man has been found ever praying. To be sure in its initial emphasis, prayer means “to ask,” “to beg”; but

can one ask, except in the process of asking, he receive? "Thou hadst not sought me," says Pascal, "hadst thou not known me." Primitive tribes have been found lifting aloft their hands for hours in silent prayer—not asking, but reflectively receiving, through communion, through confession, through contrition, the stimulus of a divine response refectory and satisfying. This experience of the human heart, primitive as it may be, shows itself in the pilgrimage of the soul upon a highway which reaches to heaven. This is an aspect of mysticism, native to man, which cultivates its very potent sway over the life of man by what we call prayer to his God.

Mysticism has ever been the foundling of theological scandal, but the brave soul that adopts it to his bosom receives the fair compensation of knowing undiscovered truths and an amplified experience of fellowship with Jehovah. There is a form of mysticism found in Eastern religions which is the mysticism of the devotee, and manifests itself in fanaticism. From one form of hysteria or another this type of a false mysticism has gotten to itself distrust. But the most vital need of the Christian heart is to walk with God, to look into His shining face, to hear words inaudible to the ears of sense, and to lay hold of His invisible hands, and be led, as a father would lead the unfaltering feet of his own child of simple faith. The life of the true mystic thirsts for God, and he finds,

his sought-for springs at the heavenward goal of this highway, and these springs prove the source of all healthy religious energy and sustaining grace. In the spiritual attainments of Zoroaster, the Persian; of Moses, who endured as "seeing Him who is invisible;" of Socrates, the prophet of Greece; of Augustine, the father; of Francis, the sweet spirit of Assisi; and, pre-eminently, of Jesus, the Nazarene, the world has the witness of great souls that walked over this highway of prayer,—moved, prompted, indeed called by the magnificent need of their souls which they discovered could be answered fully by God.

It is quite common in our day to consider it extravagant to suggest that the soul of man has any secrets which lie beyond our understanding, and yet Jacob saw the angels going on, intuitively, ascending. The universal craving of the human heart goes out over the highway. The life of prayer is laughed out of court by many who assume the contemptuous and amused attitude of the systematic and rationalistic thinker. But so unavailing are the efforts of the purely intellectual, and so unproductive is cold rationalism to reach any solution of a life that has the daily experience of having uninterrupted need of his God, with a corresponding response to this need, that this age has no answer to make to the thesis that the soul is possessed of qualities by which it can and does apprehend the supernatural.

The sphere of the soul transcends matter-of-factness. Surely man would not be worthy of his splendid mental, and sensuous, and physical experience, did not the soul have experiences that go far beyond our daily wisdom and the majestic delights of the terrestrial life of man. The realm of the soul lies along the highway of prayer, wherefrom the blazing flame of heaven kindles its inward light.

HEAVEN BENDS TO EVERY TROUBLED HEART

When the angels told the story of Jacob's troubled heart and restless head, Heaven whispered back an answer. The angels descended over heaven's highway. The God-sent angels bear back responses in God's way and in God's own time to every prayer. Man in his prayer to God is taught that there is a real relation between his human need and the divine supply. In the return of the angels—God's response—we soon learn that prayer relates us to the supernatural just as the bodily senses relate us to the world in which we dwell. Through prayer the soul is led to divine the spiritual in the drudgeries and humdrum experiences of life. The Christian mystic does not have partial and occasional experiences, born of some unusual and fantastic experience, but he is ever a pilgrim of heaven's highway, and thus, however feebly at times, holds himself in constant communion with the divine.

The soul must be born again, says Jesus, but the soul moves on successively growing into larger attainments and unto the highest experiences. "We can thus be born more than once," says Maeterlinck, "and at each of these new births we draw a little nearer to our God." God answers prayers not simply to grant what we ask or to supply what we barely need, but also to teach us how to grow in our spiritual life.

It was because the angels descended that Jacob saw the Lord standing above the ladder, Jacob was in conflict with himself. His supremest desire at this moment was to clarify his sense of God and to disentangle himself from the dishonesty, deception and the unfair treatment of his brother, Esau. The angels were descending and thus whispering to this broken-spirited dreamer, this lonely-hearted seeker after God, that God understood and God would right all his anxieties.

Jesus very intensely stimulates the hope within us that we can know the meaning of the heart's strange and bitter conflicts, and that through a companionship with Himself initiated in prayer, we can enlist the sympathy and fellowship of the Father. "For he that hath known the son, hath known the father also." Thus by prayer we learn that the great inter-related worlds of sense and spirit have yet in their proper understanding, vast rooms of newer knowledge and hidden glories.

GOD AND MAN MEET ON THE HIGHWAY

In his moment of triumph Jacob saw the angels ascending and descending, earth and heaven meeting; God and man walking over heaven's highway in fellowship. The initiation of sinning Jacob's prayer lay in his need of a forgiving God. But his reward came richly in a renewal of his sense of kinship with Jehovah. The descending angels reanimated the drooping Jacob. God has made us in His own image, and it is by that subtle recognition of the soul that we are still in the process of being made that aids man to pray. We cannot set out stakes and say that human nature can come thus far and no farther. The potentialities and possibilities of man become infinite in the light of the Light of Jesus. The soul of Jesus, like an untenanted child, ever lived as in actual possession of Jehovah. So the intuition of the God-made image in man seeks always its great kinsman.

Who would deny to the confused worshipper who bows in prayer, the assurance that when his heart cries out to the Ineffable One to answer his distressed cry, that then angels come assuring the timid soul he may know perfectly the God that standeth at the top of the ladder, all and in all?

Psychology takes cognizance of intellect, will and feeling as the faculties which are the husbandman gathering the fruits of all knowledge for man, but there is yet a vineyard of spiritual truth which cannot be invaded by any of these faculties alone. The

mystic recognizes that when at prayer the intellect, the will and the emotions interplay, all the gateways of the vineyard are opened wide. The spirit of God speaks to each so subtilely, yet so simply; so comprehensively, yet so specifically, that while at prayer the soul combines all its faculties that it might come into possession of the knowledge of the spiritual and the divine. When praying we do not expect simply that our hearts be filled full of the love of God, nor our minds to be illumined, nor our wills to be surrendered. There is yet an experience far and away beyond indeed all of these combined—it is the conscious communion with a spirit, even our Father in heaven. We walk with God, unafraid, serene, confident, possessing a conscious fellowship with Jehovah. Two souls have met and answered each the other. Whenever the element of spontaneity in intellect, will or feeling abounds in any psychic process they may take, as the worshipper walks with God, the mystic's claim of "knowing God without intermediary, and as it were face to face," has won its victory. At prayer the soul has communicated with God. So Jacob cried, "surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not."

Two disciplines are necessary to one who engages in the practice of prayer. The discipline of self as it relates to his own moral conquest and the discipline of self as it relates to the world in which he lives. How much the moral tutelage of the in-

dividual enters into an acquaintance with God we cannot well determine. The crafty Jacob, while at prayer had evidently experienced a real repentance of heart. He made a vow to a better life. This discipline of self must be present in any attempt to have knowledge of the altogether Holy One. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." It is certainly true that the mystic must buttress his real attainments in spiritual things by well-balanced moral disciplines, and these moral and spiritual disciplines of oneself, if persisted in, will bring their own reward.

Tired-hearted man after all seeks to know God. The Christian mystic's first impulse to this actual knowledge is a recognition of his inherent need of God. Trust in Jesus, His Son and disciplinary fellowship with Him, is the process toward man's sublimest conception of Jehovah Himself. The initial step toward the shining throne room lies in a recognition that God is accessible and will make Himself abundantly manifest to man. The highway over which he comes to his knowledge is prayer. Let the pilgrim who walks the highway to heaven ever know that the first step on the highway lies at the place where the highway touches earth.

V

THE IMPERATIVE OF POWER

"Receive ye the Holy Spirit."—JOHN 20:21.

THE imperative challenge in the Kingdom of God in this twentieth century is not for more people; nor is the challenge for more pocketbooks, greatly mistaken as we may have been in forcing that issue; nor for more personality, as mighty as it may be; but the imperative challenge to the Kingdom of God in this, our day, is for more power.

It is quickly assumed to be a hard thing to tell what we mean by power; but if it is easy to understand that Jehovah, the Creator, the Provider, the Father, gathered chaos in his hand and flung it into a surpassing universe of cosmos; or if it is easy to understand that Jesus came as the Messiah, and by His gentle gift upon the Cross, captivated the heart of the human race by flashing upon its understanding the simplest and yet the profoundest experience, that Jehovah is a loving, forgiving Father, it is equally easy to understand that the Holy Spirit is a Person inherent, resident, irresistible, causative, and imperative, and all the life of the soul has its genesis, tutelage and fullness by

the Holy Spirit, whose habitation in the heart is power.

Power is the Holy Spirit of God in the soul seeking expression through the processes of the heart, mind and will.

The New Testament calls out to us, "Be ye filled with the Spirit," summons us, "to live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit." "To speak not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and power." It reminds us that we sing with the Spirit; it declares that "the love of God hath flooded our heart by the Holy Spirit," and that the fragrance, and bloom and fruitage of life is the normal expression of the power of the Spirit within the heart, seeking the flowering of the spiritual life in qualities of unusual service.

The Church needs to learn, not so much "to organize, as to agonize." Not alone to become more extensive, but more intensive.

To underwrite its program with prayer.
To inspire its purpose with power.
To vitalize its vastness.
To be filled with the spirit.

ACTIVITY DIFFERS MUCH FROM RECEPTIVITY

We have so striven as disciples of our Master to keep up with the increasing schedule of activities of the church in this, our day, that we have forgotten how to take time for the receptivity of the Holy Spirit and power.

While we lengthen the stakes of our tabernacle and enlarge the circumference of the Kingdom,

make loud noises with our hammers and saw and planes, we are passing daily, hourly, to and fro before a closed door, an empty room, the closet of prayer, the secret house of personal devotion and power. Fellowship neglected, a fruitless life, failure in intimate friendship with Jesus Christ mean faithlessness in putting first things first.

Does not a trumpet note, now and then, warn us that by the multiplicity of an external doing of things we are overlooking the inner springs of power?

The imperative of Jesus calls us to receive the Holy Spirit—and power. We receive the Spirit as a mother's heart receives its gentleness of love; we receive the Spirit as a ship's sails receives the sweep of the winds, as it is driven before the gale; as the storm receives the fullness of the rain; as a furnace melts with the blast of fire; as the olive receives the infusion of oil; as the green grass gathers its freshness from the falling dew; as the marsh is filled full by the tides of the sea.

“How still the plains of the waters be,
The tide is in his ecstasy,
The tide is at its highest height—
And it is night.
But I would I could know
What swimmeth below,
When the tide comes in.
On the length and the breadth of the
Marvelous marshes of Glynn.”

THE POTENTIAL OF POWER

Not in the storm, but in the stillness came Elijah's power. The heavens circuiting amid the

magnificence of powers unmeasured yet by man roll on with their silent song.

Often in my boyhood's home in "Old Virginy," I would leave my field of play and gaze with wonder at the big flying wheel of the city's powerhouse. Entranced I would stand and listen to the whirling anthem of the wheels of industry, but never a sound was heard, and only the churning and crooning of the trolley car pulling over a hill, or the scattering lights that spangled street and parlour demonstrated to me how the source of all the power lay in the big wheel, quietly whirring its way to release the electric current.

Once two of us who played side by side made an actual telephone. A bar of tempered steel thrust against the dynamo for magnetizing, a tintype picture cut in a circle, an induction coil, a wooden pill box, set carefully upon a hollowed broom handle, the stringing of wires, and miracle of boyhood's magic hands, my friend and I talked over spaces with our voices. But the years have taught me to set the potential of the telephone back to the quietly revolving fly-wheel.

A friend told me how he sat beneath a waterfall in the Island of Jamaica, where the little basin formed in the mountains was a favourite retreat for those who loved to be awed by God's spilling His waterfalls over the high precipices, which seemed sometimes to reach to the walls of paradise, and so loud was the tumbling water reverberated,

through the narrow glen, that he shouted into the ear of his companion by his side, "Isn't it quiet here?" There is a stillness which may be discerned amid the hot confusions of our daily tasks. The potential of quietness tells the method of the power of the Holy Spirit in a life.

One of the most beautiful figures to illustrate the silent strength of God's Spirit in the life of man lies in the transpiration of the trees.

"I think that I shall never see
A poem as lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is pressed
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast.

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts its leafy hands to pray.

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair.

Upon whose bosom snow has lain,
Who intimately lives with the rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree."

The process of transpiration is the method by which the leaves of the tree breathe out the balminess of a day in June. Up from the roots through the capillaries to the remotest fibre of the leaves and fruit the tree goes on lifting daily sometimes a half a ton of water, and a birch tree with two hundred thousand leaves is busy with every leaf all the summer-time.

But Niagara roars, foams, leaps and falls, spill-

ing five hundred thousand tons of water each minute to the rapids below, and no wonder we gaze upon such power that is used to light the streets of Buffalo and Niagara and maybe a score of other cities. But quietly the ten million far-famed peach trees of the State of Georgia lift annually by transpiration an equal volume of water as falls over the ledges of the mighty Niagara each day.

The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.

THE IMPERATIVE OF INITIATIVE

The Spirit of God is to be received—and power comes with reception, but the scriptures teach us also that, “If ye being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.” We may quench the Spirit and strangle power, we may grieve the Spirit and lapse into weakness. The forces which do violence to human nature and often grip a man’s soul and bring him through a new birth into a spiritual Kingdom and register him as a citizen of a heavenly race, are none other forces than the regenerative processes of the Holy Spirit of God made available by a humble faith in man’s Redemption through the Blood of Jesus of the Cross.

The power of the Holy Spirit is invisible, imponderable, impalpable, but imperative.

“Except a man be born of the water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of

Heaven.” “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you.” “Receive ye the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect in the flesh?” “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon you.”

The Spirit called us to power when you and I looked for the first time with understanding into the face of a suffering Saviour; the Holy Spirit called us when our baby died and the Comforter came; the Spirit maketh intercession for us in every experience of temptation, “the Spirit striveth against the flesh and the flesh striveth against the Spirit so that ye cannot do the things ye would.”

I call upon you to receive the Holy Spirit, seek an imperative initiative in realizing the resource which is already yours, cultivate the gift, develop the wealth, utilize the power by which you will be enabled “to do all things through Him who strengtheneth (empowereth) you.” A man is made a Christian by the Holy Spirit and developed all through his sainthood by the self-same power.

The power of the divine life throbbing and pulsing through the disciple of Christ comes as you and I yield to the illumination, the leadership and control of the Holy Spirit and the life of submission

warrants a life divinely directed to the highest goals of usefulness and fullness.

Every community has its "born fiddler." Usually he is counted the genius of the countryside, and his flashy and jerky snatches of the popular airs and familiar ditties are the marvels of all his neighbours. Every frolic finds him the favourite, and at every festival he is the craze. And the same community, oftentimes, has a demure and gentle lad whom they patronizingly call William Smith, just an unnoticed lad. And some great day of awakening finds William Smith announcing an ambition to become a master violinist. The neighbours are amused and the initiated are bored by the pretensions of the obscure boy. His frightened face and shy manners and curling hair represent to the friends of his family a nice little lad, but not a mark of genius shows itself to them, at least not the genius of Uncle George, the fiddler with music born in his soul.

William Smith passes, in time, through the school, on to the conservatory of the great city. During the first long tedious twelve months he spends in studying the muscles of the wrist, the possibility of touching lightly and the genius of gripping the strings to their supremest tension. At the close of the first year William Smith returns to his village to hear Uncle George, still in the center of the stage, strumming away at the same old tune. Another year the growing lad gives to

instruction in the technique of the violin; he breaks to bits and reconstructs instrument after instrument, to discover the finest resonance. He spends one month on the theory of the violin-string tension, another period he toils over the theory of music, the range of tone values and the colourings of sounds; he lives a while in the biographies of the great masters; grows to know the classics of violin and harp through the centuries of song until his hand and brain merge out of youthhood to manhood's flush meridian. Another year the student now with wondrous eyes returns to hear again the praises of Uncle George as he "shakes the feet with irresistible spell"—playing still the same old changeless, though maybe a captivating tune.

The third year the school of the masters finds William Smith revelling in the delight of the artist whose calling comes to its glory. Aria after aria he masters. Sometimes the tones of a thunder-girted storm sweep over the sighing strings; now a zephyr as gentle as an angel's caress bears the "scent of hay-fields and summer rains" to the homesick heart of the musician now sighing for the summer joys of his home left long ago. The lad has grown to be a genius, full and complete in the mastery of string and bow and melody. And then he returns to his family and over in the great hall of the village his expectant, doubting neighbours gather for William Smith's concert appearance. First he captures the dozen best music lovers of the company

by the faultless rendering of the most difficult of the trying classics: they nod to one another that a genius has come out of the village to bring them fame. Song by song, sonata by sonata, berceuse after berceuse—one upon another flow on in sweet charm upon the stirring and fascinated emotions of the common crowd and the triumph of the artist is all but come—and then—the night closes with the violin softly crooning “Home, Sweet Home,” by the lad who came back to his own people.

The crackling of the logs on the fireplace with the cheer and warmth of the flames; the lullaby of a mother singing her child to its night’s repose; the father’s reading the forty-sixth Psalm at the family altar; the whimper of a sick little girl; the laughter, and joys and charm of a Christmas morning lilting out of the Stradivarius, vibrating with the glowing soul of the master musician; all, all have contributed to summon the bursting applause to herald William Smith as the matchless master of the violin.

Mind you, Uncle George still is playing, still is playing the same old changeless tune. Both were possessed with the same gift in the beginning of childhood, and Uncle George, following nature’s easy lanes, walked about in the unenlarging circumference of his early genius; while William Smith toiled and strove and sought, and found the wings of the muse by which he soared to the heights

of God and caught the charm of angel's songs beating themselves out of the harps of heaven.

The disciple who unceasingly keeps to his task, who daily exercises the grace of serving his fellow-man, and looks through the skylights of his soul fresh each day upon the face of God, will find an expanding spirit and a potential of spiritual power undreamed of in those first days when God called him to exercise the gift of life eternal.

VI

THE SPARROW'S SCAR

"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father."—
MATTHEW 10:29.

SORROWS are the supreme opportunities of the soul. The great souls of earth have all suffered. None has grown great who has not grieved. Light-hearted youth laughs, but only great hearts can smile. Sorrow is the master-culture of the soul.

Just opposite my study window in New York City there opened the vista of a charming park. On a blustery day in March a brown shadow fell headlong from the trees to the mud of the city street below. The wind-swept rain had caught a sparrow and beaten its wings against the dangerously charged trolley wire. The injured bird was baffled on the blocks beside the roadway. At first the sparrow seemed to play in the joy of rustling its wings beneath the damp crust of dirt, but its struggles and more faintly spreading wings challenged me to visit the fallen bird, and I found it dead. The high and rough winds, the drenching rain, the legions of heaven's lightning harnessed in the trolley wire, the sunshine of forests primeval stored in the coal of the powerhouse, the chemistry

of the centuries—all had flung with violence the vesper sparrow to the ground, overwhelmed in death. No winging mate nor fancier of birds nor other eyes than my own saw, and none at all cared for the fall, except the sparrow's Sponsor. His eyes were watching. Never a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father.

THE SPARROW'S SPONSOR

Men still are asking the old, old question, "Does the Father of men and of the gentle Jesus send all this trouble to us?" "Why does pain ceaselessly pursue its punitive path?" "Why must tears and losses and broken hopes come to an otherwise happy world?" Well, a light answer to all these questions is that our phrases are wrong. Perhaps the Father does not send trouble. Maybe He does not permit trouble, but our Father controls it. He balances the Pleiades, and He numbers the hairs of the head, and no sparrow falls without your Father. The firmament and earth's foundations, the depths of the sea and the world of winds are under the will of the sparrow's Sponsor, and no less directly and none the less really does He watch the cosmic universe than He fathers the sparrow's fall. The Father sees the falling, but He does not stay the fall. The sparrow falls—that is the way of sorrow. Never a tear or a tragedy, never a wound or a withered hope, but the Father's eyes see, and His purposes control.

The reason why all this troubled earth has sorrows, came to me to-day with a clear answer. The streets of our saddened city on this Sunday are silent, save for the clang of the ambulance bells, the rumble of the carriages of death, and the swift couriers of healing physicians and ministering nurses. An epidemic has seized upon the city's life, and churches have been closed. Worshippers gather in their homes and pray and sing and serve in quiet confidence with the Watching Father. Somehow to-day the city is awakening to the presence of God. That is my answer to the problem of pain—the souls of men have no teacher but sorrow. Books teach the mind. The common experience of laughter and love and life tutor the heart. The will learns slowly, if it learns at all, but great souls grow only through sorrows. Jesus wept because men did not see that the body is but the home of the soul, and a weeping Christ will never dry His tears until the sons of men understand that the life of the soul is the supreme quest.

Have you just separated from a fallen sparrow? Are nearly beaten out its wings? Have your eyes been filled with tears that come from the failure of hopes? Has the silent bruise of death stilled and stunned your faith? Take heed, friend, for the Father watches the falling and the fall and the faith, and He is whispering to the soul.

It was a drear day in August, and it was raining. I had crossed the river of my childhood to

the green plain where lay my parents' graves. I knew that white roses would be beaten to wasted petals by the rain that day, and that their beauty and fragrance would be lost in its downpour. I was about to turn back from this act of simple homage to my friends when the voice of the soul spoke to me to go again and lay the trailing flowers on the graves, for I remembered that through the rainy days of school-boy sorrows, of youthful pangs, and manhood's moods, my parents all the way had scattered roses along my pathway, and I left their dreamless homes white with roses, while the Sleepless Father watched.

I walked a mile with Pleasure,
She chattered all the way;
But left me none the wiser
For all she had to say.

I walked a mile with Sorrow,
And ne'er a word said she:
But oh, the things I learned from her
When Sorrow walked with me.

THE SPARROW'S SUFFERING

No need to point men to the streets along which sorrow ever beckons us with its finger to walk beside her. Those who suffer most are the last to shrink from its wounds, for sorrow opens the eyes of the soul, keeps clean the windows through which the soul sees the race of men passing by. They who look through the filmy glass of reason see but obscurely. Only the soul with skylights polished by sorrow sees straight to God. Trouble cannot be

argued into being right by the keenest brains of men, but the soul understands that sorrow alone enables one to see the sorrow of other men. The soul that has suffered knows by intuition how to see the hidden hurts of other hearts. No soul has ever grown big except it traces its beginning to a sorrow or a cross on a hill or through tears that flowed from a garden in a valley.

When we have suffered our windows look out on a race akin to us. Having wept, the soul is sensitive to wipe other tears away. The soul having triumphantly smiled through trouble understands the smile of those who suffer still. The soul through sorrow learns to serve. Those vast spiritual resources, stifled and cold and hard, when touched by the glaring sun of affliction, melt and move into rivers of benediction and streams of beneficent ministry through the meadows where lonely men live.

War realizes the only blessing it has for men when the sufferings of war reveal the hidden glories of the soul. The heroisms of war stir and inspire and then pass away. The sorrows of war inspire and bless and abide forever. A wounded lad carries a bleeding enemy to the dressing station, because sorrow has taught the soul to serve. The wearied physician and fainting nurse seek neither rest nor reward for their labour, because temples pulsing with pain have pleaded for a ministry unrewarded either by money or by pause. Kindly souled women and tender men, when sorrow has

addressed them, do the common tasks. Learned teachers from universities wash Flanders' mud from soldiers' leggings. Women of fashion in the city sleep on narrow cots in the homes of the poor. Ministers leave their pulpits and run menial errands for the house of affliction. The soul of the city, sobered by sorrow, extends its hand of sympathy and service to every stranger that has wandered inside its walls.

The sparrow's fall has shown the city God.

THE SCAR AND THE SONG

Sorrow teaches the soul not to sigh but to sing, not to mope but to make music.

I had always regarded the sparrow a plague among men, because the kindest of bird lovers have detested the house sparrow—the ruffian in feathers, cruel, merciless, and a pest. In this scourge of sparrows is the song sparrow, maybe the sweetest singer of all the fields, with a “charming song, one high note thrice repeated, and then a canary-like cadenza.”

“No sun—no moon,
No morn—no noon,
No dawn—no dusk—no proper time of day;
No sky—no earthly view,
No distant looking blue,
No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,
No shades, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,
No fruits, no flowers, no birds, no leaves—
November!

But still the sparrow sings his songs out in the

fields. Frank Chapman, in "Bird Life," writes: "His modest chant always suggests good cheer and contentment, but when heard in silent February it seems the divinest bird lay to which mortal ever listened. The magic of his voice bridges the cold months of early spring. As we listen to him the brown fields seem green, flowers bloom, and the bare branches become clad with softly rustling leaves."

When the scourge comes the soul sings its sweetest hymns. Sorrow and sickness and sin always discover earth's best poets. Midnight darkness closed Milton's eyes, but wooed the song of "Paradise Lost" from his open-windowed soul. Lord Tennyson sang his best song, "Believing where we cannot prove," with the scar of his fallen friend's death still in his heart. Fanny Crosby sang all her gentle songs through that long life while the scars of blindness closed her eyes. When the "Titanic" foundered, the sorrows of the sea called upon the soul to sing in the open lifeboats, "Nearer My God to Thee."

Black should never be sorrow's colour. It should be white or gold or a triumphant red that promises the sunrise of a better day.

Grief sometimes differs from the nobler word, sorrow, for grief only often shakes the human frame, and cuts the cord of melody; but sorrow is a teacher which deftly touches the deeps of the soul and releases its hosannas of song.

Henrik Ibsen, in "The Pretenders," teaches the secret of the scar and the song in this dialogue: King Skule says:

"Tell me, Jatgeir, how came you to be a bard? Who taught you song-craft?"

"Song-craft," answers Jatgeir, "cannot be taught."

"Cannot be taught? How came it then?"

"The gift of sorrow came to me, and I was a bard."

"Then," says the astonished king, "it is the gift of sorrow that a bard needs?"

And Jatgeir answers:

"It was sorrow I needed."

Jesus, the world's Divinest Man of Sorrows, inspired the "Hallelujah Chorus" on a cross.

These songs that burst out of the scars of the fallen sparrows will never cease, even in the land that lies beyond the tempests where the colours in the skies blend into the rainbow that hushes the storm to sleep.

VII

THE MODERN MASTER

"This same Jesus."—ACTS 1-11.

IT was left to Ernest Renan, the eminent French critic, to set forth Jesus as the Modern Master in his striking words, "A thousand times more alive, a thousand times more loved, since thy death than during the days of thy pilgrimage here; thou shalt become so truly the corner-stone of humanity that to tear thy name from the world were to shake its foundations."

Jesus captivated the great throbbing heart of the humble people in the age in which He lived none the less, than as the Modern Master, He dominates the life of civilization in this our own day.

Somehow, the fact of the tragedy of the Cross has a meaning which at once transcends all effort to explain; and whether the theory of the death of Jesus be that of the Middle Ages or that of the modern scholarship, the event of His death in both cases is a spiritual event which strangely contributes a historic dynamic to the centuries, and is still transforming the world. The resurrection of its Founder is a fact peculiar to Christianity. After three days, unwitnessed, unheralded, Jesus

came out of death with a body changed, improved, immortal, incorruptible, and spiritual. None but sympathetic disciples ever saw Him in the forty days preceding the ascension. His body thus glorified challenged the faith and the best spiritual powers of His disciples.

A HISTORICAL FACT

The New Testament abounds with the expectant hope of the resurrection of Jesus. He, Himself, often spoke of it. It is clearly the inspiration of the preaching of the early church, and to attain to the power of His resurrection was a motive which called out the noblest service of the early apostles. The book of Romans, whose integrity has never been successfully questioned, states, "He was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." And the first letter to the Corinthian church, whose place as a historical book is wholly established, declares: "If there be no resurrection of the dead then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith also vain."

The resurrection of Jesus is as easily proved from unimpeached records as is the incident of George Washington's crossing the Delaware. In our day of distress observers of the battle-fields in Europe declare that there was scarce a soldier who did not believe in the fact of the immortality of the soul, and as a corollary to this belief the vast

regiments of thinking soldiers, with blinding fire-blasts and reeking shrapnel swathing death lanes on all sides of them, somehow are taking a greater and realer comfort in the fact of resurrection, which couples together the immortal soul and the body after death.

THE MASTER OF HIS INTIMATES

The New Testament presents the record of more than five hundred eye-witnesses to the risen Lord. History, recorded by a careful scribe, years after rumors and traditions have cleared away, increases its value as a record the longer its pages remain unimpeached. Thus with the New Testament presenting Mary in the early morning crying, "Rabboni," and those other women in the garden meeting the Lord face to face, with the pensive disciples on the Emmaus road testifying to His presence; and Peter alone in some Galilean bower; and at the close of the first Sunday the ten disciples in the barred room stirred to the ecstasy of worship by the sudden appearance of Jesus—certainly these eye-witnesses become cumulative as a jury of spectators of the risen Jesus captivating His little company of believers. Later we have the Lord's presentation of himself to the eleven, when Thomas comes forth with his testimony immortal, in reassuring conversation with James, his doubting brother. To the five hundred in a single epiphany, to the fisher by Tiberius Lake, and finally to the

disciples on the way to Bethany, when they saw Him gently lifted, transported, ascending to the heavens, from which in like manner He shall return. Upon the testimony of these eye-witnesses of record we might almost rest. Greenleaf, the world's great authority on evidence, in his volume on the harmony of the Four Gospels as related to the evidence of the eye-witnesses to the resurrection, states his significant opinion that "The testimony of the eye-witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus is conclusive." The proof from the record convinces one of the fact.

Death is the natural end of all men. You lose a friend by death. You come to me at the close of three days and say, "Come, dine with me, I have a friend risen from the dead." I make light of your strange fancy. I answer you: "I will not come; I knew your friend. It was natural that he die. He suffered and murmured because he suffered. He had the common faults of men. It was natural that he die, for to all men there comes once death." But here is Jesus, the contemporary of the ages, among philosophers the chief, among teachers the first, he stands head and shoulders above all men, sinless, stainless, scarless in moral fiber. He sweeps through the centuries as the silhouetted figure against the skyline of every age. Nations which sat in darkness have seen his great light. "Never a single word which he uttered has been discredited," cried Romanes, and Jesus in His

earthly career has kept all the law which, if a man keeps, says Jehovah, he shall live thereby. But Jesus dies, He is buried, and the onlooking bystander asks of God: "Where is thy integrity? Why should a blameless life, having kept the law, reap the wages of sin, being sinless?" "God's character," writes Johnston-Ross, "is at stake, but in the last moment he is rescued by the resurrection of Jesus." It were a greater miracle to explain God and solve the problem of Jesus without resurrection than to accept the fact of a risen Lord. Greater even than his singular personality are the survival values of the spiritual qualities and persistent moral buttresses of the post-resurrection expressions of the life of Jesus. Jesus, because of what He was, and what He is, and what He did, must rise from the dead, else His life is commonplace as man's.

THE MASTER OF MODERN LIFE

Often by the testimony of the saints who endure, often by the transformation of barbarous communities into centers of mercy, by the hospitals that literally fleck every hillside as flowers cover the vales, often by the quiet intrusion of the life of the living risen Christ with the gentleness of one who quenches no smoking flax and breaks no bruised or broken reed into the very potential centers of civic and national, and international affairs, Jesus is conquering the earth. The world has all

but made up its mind that Jesus lives and still involves his life in the events and programs of man. Recently a prominent minister of Jesus was introduced by a Jewish rabbi.

"You," he said, "believe in the Christ that has come and conquered. We believe in the Messiah yet to come, but we desire to say that if our Messiah will meet the measure of your Christ, we as Jews shall be satisfied."

But the doctrine of the resurrection stands like a sentinel's steel armour, empty in a picture museum unless we can thrust into the doctrine a vital personality who moves the shining armour to take its place in the lists of life.

The fact that Jesus rose from the dead spiritualizes the common ways of men. He is their companion on the plains, in the battles, in the quiet agony of grief. His disciples had lost Him, and they were seeking His grave:

"Oh! could'st thou but know
With what deep devotedness of woe
We wept thy absence, o'er and o'er.
Again thinking of thee, still of thee,
Till thought grew pain, and memory,
Like a drop that night and day
Falls cold and ceaseless, wore our hearts away."

But Jesus was in the garden at the very side of Mary the devoted; on the road to the quiet village he was walking with the two dejected men; in the profusion of a bower of springing flowers he cheered and forgave the denying Peter; and in the

upper room, with the windows closed and barriers hung, he smiled in victory on the defeated, fearing Eleven. When we walk along the Via Dolorosa, Jesus is our companion, our presence, our friend. Every common task has a halo of glory surrounding it. The cross on our insignia is no longer a rude method of death, it is the signal of the hosts of the largest life. Bethlehem has hallowed every cradle with its child, Gethsemane has wrapped the world in a common badge of fellowship of sorrow, and Golgotha is the challenge to every wronged man to wait patiently for a final justice.

If a man is a Christian, he does not have to raise his voice to summon his Christ in the dark night, when the pulse beats slow and the songs have stilled their voices. He is the alert Christ. He is thrusting our doors inward, seeking to befriend us, when we thought Him asleep in the grave. The drudgeries of the housewife and the gray grind of the fretting wheels of commerce are every day being transformed in the delights of victories and the dreams of those who overcome. Donald Hankey discovered Him in the trenches of war when the summons to charge came. "Men," he said, "if wounded, 'Blighty'; if killed, resurrection."

Mount Pilatus, famous for the splendour of its sunrises, reaches its highest point at Eisel. I stood there in the early morning, shrouded in the garments of the sunless gloom, watching the east for the sunrise. The Bernese Alps, stretching away

for one hundred and fifty miles, were like the gray-bloused shoulders of a giant asleep. A score of Swiss lakes were dull in their dim outlines at our feet below. It was chill and drear. But away in the east were faint ribbons of blue and streamers of crimson bordering along the trail of the breaking day. The Alps were now flaming red at their crests; and the Swiss lakes were glowing into pearl and opal iridescent charm, the highest peaks shone with golden sunbeams glistening, and every niche and cranny of the mountains were filled with the effulgent light: the sun was rising over Pilatus and daylight was everywhere. Many are the gray, sunless mornings in our lives, we cannot understand them. Drear, tragic, unsolved often are these problems of Providence, perchance a death, a financial collapse, a moral disaster, a cataclysm of war; but Jesus is a risen Lord, and He reveals Himself often in the patient waiting, often in the solitude of sunless hours, often when the east winds have roughened the seas or the bugle has summoned men to blood and battle, He reveals and quickens hope; and surely, never failing, at last to the waiting disciples He floods the soul with His shining presence and quieting assurance and His benediction of peace—and there is sunlight everywhere.

THE MASTER OF THE UNKNOWN

Christianity teaches its disciples that the Christian's death is a triumph, not a tragedy; death is a

dream of hope, never a disaster; death is a victory, never a verdict of guilt. Oftentimes when I try to recall the happiest days of life, I wander back to the ecstasies of joy that came to me on the days when my parents went into the dream of hope. My father had been preaching the truths of the gospel of Jesus for nearly half a century, and that was his crowning; she, the preacher's wife, had wept and smiled and lifted and garnered with him, and on that day she came into the victory of the waving palms.

Death, taught Jesus, is a sleep, and when the day is dying the tired child climbs into his father's arms and falls asleep to waken in the early morning in a world where he never grows weary of toil and his work never rusts with failure. He taught, too, that the figure of the exodus is the figure of death. Moses and Elias spoke of his exodus, the passing out of slavery, life's limitations, its task-master's scourge the shrouded glory of life through the dark days of the wilderness, into the land of freedom and days of dreams fulfilled, and purposes and plans perfected and a rich land, and a throne, and a king entered upon his endless reign. This is death, teaches Jesus.

He who, in his boyhood, has watched the ships sail out to sea knows the figure by which Paul interprets death to Christianity. "The time of my departure is at hand." With the imagination of a boy who was born near the sea, he is watching the

ships unmoor. There they depart, the ships, casting off the ropes, the hawsers, the cords that held them fast. They have unmoored. They drift silently. They spread the canvas and trim the sails for newer harbours, better harbours, always with hope, always seeing golden strands and quiet waters overseas. The ship is lost awhile, and moors again beyond the flowing of the tide, in the harbour of God. This tie of friendship, the cares of home life, the ropes that entwine us with the earthly things, we cast off one by one, we set our sails, and the waters are quiet waters and the land is "the land of a fadeless day." Death is an unmooring; Jesus is the Master of the Unknown.

When Saint John, the Apostle of Love, had finished his course and the call had come, they gathered about him and he told them perhaps that death was a home-coming. "I go to prepare a home for you," he had heard Jesus say, and John was confident in his fading days that he was going home. Death was near. And this was his hope: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; we shall be like him." The apostle of old age had seen the home and the returning Christ, for when he had led them as far as Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them and they worshipped as he was carried into heaven, and a voice said, "This same Jesus (the risen Lord) which is taken up from you into

heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go."

Perchance He is near; no man knows His time to return. The hillsides may now even be forests of purple glory. Jesus is coming again. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

"There's a King and Captain high, who'll be comin' by-and-by,
And He'll find me hoein' cotton when He comes;
You will hear His legions chargin' in the thunders of the sky,
And He'll find me hoein' cotton when He comes!

When He comes, when He comes,
All the dead will rise in answer to His drums,
While the fires of His encampment star the firmament on high,
And the heavens are rolled asunder, when He comes!

There's a Man they thrust aside, who was tortured till He died,
And He'll find me hoein' cotton when He comes;
He was hated and rejected, He was scourged and crucified,
But He'll find me hoein' cotton when He comes!

When He comes, when He comes,
He'll be ringed with saints and angels when He comes;
They'll be shoutin' out hosannas to the Man that men denied,
And I'll kneel among my cotton, when He comes!"

VIII

THE PLENITUDE OF PRAYER

“Now it came to pass, that Jesus having been baptized and praying, the heaven was opened.”—LUKE 3:21.

THE heaven was opened and Jesus saw the Dove, and God and everything. While praying, the heaven opened to Jesus, and Jesus opened His inner eyes to the fullest consciousness of Himself. As a lad of twelve, such a religious precocity possessed Jesus that He enjoyed the blessed experience of knowing His Father and under the Syrian sky in the nights of silence before God at Nazareth, He revelled in the delights of divine fellowship,—but now the heaven opens and Jesus, praying, enters in the plenitude of His experience with God; the plenitude of His equipment, and the plenitude of the assurance that His Father is well pleased in His Beloved.

In this brief pastoral I desire to show that the fullness of knowing God, of knowing the heavens, of knowing everything, comes while at prayer. This knowledge comes not only through prayer, but while actually praying, the progressive unfolding of all spiritual knowledge and fellowship becomes our possession.

The crowd has pushed its eager way to the rugged Baptist and has gone on its way a repentant people,—then comes Jesus, and the gentle ripples of the waters are pushed lapping about His feet, they bathe His ankles in white spray and surge in silver splendour about his loins. The awe-stricken John, buries the shining beauty of Jesus' body beneath the waters of the river, and having been baptized, while praying, the heaven opened. The Dove, beauteous, silent, descended, the voice of God mingling every sweet sound of earth, in sacred sanction, spake, "This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

He was baptized and He prayed, and the truth remains that while Jesus prayed, He climbed the golden pinnacle of prayer and the visible and invisible opened, the known and the unknown was revealed, God and man, earth and heaven opened.

To the man who prays, the silent mysteries of this universe will break into speech, and the heights and depths and breadths of divine knowledge will open their covered pathways to his invasion. To Jesus, praying, the heaven opened.

PRAYER OPENS THE SKYLIGHT OF THE SOUL

First then, Jesus saw and heard, while praying. His was a vital experience of Divine fellowship. Perhaps the Baptist saw the Dove and heard the voice. Jesus, maybe neither saw with His eyes the Dove, nor heard with His ears the voice. It was

the inner-self of Jesus that saw and heard. Jesus was more fully conscious than ever before of a personal presence, of His Father's fellowship, and of a crowning companionship hitherto not experienced. Jesus, while praying, entered into His deepest experience of God.

This experience was related, not so much with Jesus' baptism, as with His praying. This was the supreme entrance by Jesus into the fullest fellowship with God. Now the white dove shone like the light of the shekinah through the skylight of His soul, and the voice of God, which hitherto had sounded the lesser notes of His experience, now broke in a divine diapason.

When, as a timid lad of ten, my own father baptized me, I heard him say with grace in his voice, "I baptize thee, my son, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." and a new fellowship had sprung up between us from that moment, when I had been raised out of the lapping waters, I saw on his face the holy light of joy; and Jesus infinitely more grandly saw the dove and heard the voice,—while praying.

Our deepest acquaintance with God comes while praying. The plenitude of His presence then is our possession. While praying, we give Him a chance to speak and reveal Himself. I asked my theological teacher once, if a pupil of his was a strong man. He answered: "I do not know, he has never asked me a question, he only answers."

We never enter into the depths of God's self until we allow Him time to speak to us while praying. The Christian church to-day is confronted by a spectacle of humour. The prophet in the pulpit is lashing the laity to advance, while like a whimpering, whining, craven dog, it cringes in the pew, little able to fathom the prayerless note of the preacher and without that vital experience of the deepest spiritual things himself, to warrant an irresistible motive to advance. We have clamoured so much for advance, for making exhibit of our strength, and have given so little time for retreat, the retreat of experience, that this Christian age takes no time to "Be still and know that I am God." But with it all, honest hearts and simple faiths are not deceived.

This age is alert for the prophet, who has forged like steel into his soul, the certainty of his belief in God, and has wrought out of a rugged and sublime experience, his abiding vision of the face of Christ. The quiet hour, the mystic meditation, the soul's aspiring, is the moment of prayer, when God is given an opportunity to speak.

My feeble hands touch the palpable, my dim eyes look on the visible, my dull ears hear the audible, my dumb tongue speaks the articulate. The high waves of terror may weaken my hands with fever, my eyes with blindness, leave my ears deaf, my tongue silent; but still in the moment of prayer, in the toils of the night's terrors, my tongue by

faith may cry out to God, my eyes behold the glory of the celestial, my ears listen, my hands reach up and lay hold of Him. This moment is the moment of the soul's ecstasy, of the inner experience of man, the moment of the possession of the plenitude of God, while praying.

“Jesus, these eyes have never seen
That radiant form of thine,
The veil of sense hangs dark between
Thy blessed face and mine.

I see Thee not. I hear Thee not,
Yet Thou art oft with me.
And earth has ne'er so dear a spot
As when I meet with Thee.”

PRAYER ARMOURS THE SAINT

Jesus was equipped for service and armoured against the wilderness temptation, while praying, for, says Luke, “Jesus praying, the Holy Spirit descended” upon Him. This was His equipment. This is ours.

To be “full of the Holy Spirit returning from the Jordan,” may be variously interpreted. I venture to believe it means that Jesus was now in a plenary way, possessed by a personality of energy, of illumination, of comfort, of companionship. The Holy Spirit guides, reveals, abides, fellowships. The spirit “leads into truth,” “brings to the remembrance,” “leaves not orphans,” and “shall be in us.” If any man lack wisdom, let him pray. If our gentle-hearted parents give us gifts of goodness, how much more shall our heaven-hearted

Father give us the Holy Spirit when we pray. The saint is often wrought with anxious confusion when he attempts to ask of God. Then the Spirit helpeth these infirmities,—while praying. The hard grind of the hours of preparation disentangle in the aftermath of prayer. After the quiet brilliance of a moment, when the soul distraught, has flung itself at the bottom of the golden highway of heaven, in that moment there comes the flush of triumph against the harassing adversary. Have not the sheep sought the confident protection of the Shepherd's staff when the hissing foe started the grass blades in the valley pasture? Was this not a sense of equipment, a fortified confidence against the enemy? Did not the sheep seek the Shepherd's rod through prayer?

Oftentimes the preacher, while praying, is given an entire sermon. A message comes to him. I believe this is the equipment of the Holy Spirit. The modern preacher is quite as much a prophet as was Isaiah. There is a prophecy of intellectualism, and a prophecy of divine revelation. The prophet whose media are the processes of the mind, a resultant of keen perception and analysis of events and trends, is a prophet indeed. Carlyle was such a prophet, of such was the famous letter of Lord Macaulay regarding the industrial development of America, such also was the genius of Thomas Jefferson in his subtle foresight of America's Civil War. Whether these were prophets simply of in-

tellectualism, I dare not say, "yet in their type, sympathy with the divine plan, and a reverent religious spirit is not foremost." There is a prophecy, real, practical, existent to-day which though akin to, yet sweeps far above the sphere of the rationalist. It has its source in the faraway hills, its stimulus is the divine mind, its spirit is bourne along in its facile flow by a warm sympathy, an ever-enlarging acquaintance with the glory of God, and its beneficent waters are for the healing of the nation. It has its genesis in the moment of prayer, it shows its power in those unexplainable flights of spiritual intensity which sometimes possess the preacher in his sermon. Nor need the true prophet's genius be the despair of the humblest man, the intellectual scullion, whom God has chosen to speak His thought and mind, and has set him in the lowest room of His kingdom,—for while praying, the heaven opens.

The rationalist must maintain that the preacher of sermons,—the prophet of God,—rises only to the level of his preparation. The Mystic avows that he can be "singularly assisted." I do not disavow preparation,—I urge it,—but the preacher is often bourne out of himself and possessed by a mighty inspiring factor, which cannot be satisfactorily assigned by himself to any faculty of his own. In the growth of the child there is no period of absolute freedom save one.

In the first stages of the growth of the child,

there is a period which may be described as the sense period, when the inhibition of the senses makes him a slave to his environment, as when the hand is burned, the yoke of suffering is ever afterwards the restraint to future action. This is the period of the authority of the senses. Then comes the inhibition of parental control, as the restraining factor upon the child's activities; this is the period of parental authority. The child is not yet free. We jump over the next period to the fourth, which is the inhibition of the youth's own judgment, the youth is restrained in his actions by sober judgment, gained out of bitter experiences. This is the period of the authority and restraint of the judgment. The period passed over is the period of license. Sense is thrown to the winds, parental control is unheeded, judgment is discarded, and the youth runs riot in the sowing of his wild oats. He stupefies his senses, breaks his parents' hearts, ruins his own reputation,—all for license in conduct and freedom from restraint. This period is the return to the animal in man.

Much the same is the experience of the preacher in his holy desire for freedom,—“the freedom of all space twixt the earth and the skies,”—the sacred reveling of the prophet as in an ecstasy, a rapture, a possession. To the preacher, as he faces a congregation, there is the restraint of the senses,—his own and his auditor's taste; then there is the restraint of the demand of the hungry souls which,

he must needs feed, a restraint which will unconsciously play in the building of a sermon, and thus, in a wise, limit the sermon to specific audiences; and next the preacher's own judgment will serve as a restraint upon what he ought to say and what he ought not. These are needful, all of them, but let taste as a restraint be cast aside, the auditors as such be unheeded, narrowing judgment be put under, and as by a singular freedom, there flows into the preacher's mind and heart a real presence and help; he abandons every ordinary inhibition to the free expression of the message of Jehovah, and with a luxuriant, full, virile, mighty confidence, the strength and authority and triumph of the prophet lays hold of him for a moment,—his equipment is at hand, and those awe-filling passages, those perfectly marvelous sentences, and those heaven-seated thoughts leave the audience in amazing wonder, with an inscrutable impression of God's presence, while the room seems to have been filled with the glory of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit. This is the hour of the preacher's inspiration. He has been bourne out of himself, into the current of God's own way and word and will. The genesis is in the closet,—while praying, the heaven opened.

PRAYER SUMMONS HEAVEN'S SMILE

Now the baptismal drama is closing. Jesus, having been baptized, prays, and hears a voice: "This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well

pleased.” This is the assurance of Jesus that His Father is satisfied with His life in the flesh. How like the choral of the celestial choir must have been this voice out of the heavens! Perhaps now, for the first time since Bethlehem, the hidden memory of the eternal has returned. God was well pleased with Jesus because He had fulfilled the expectation of God. And certainly likewise, God is well pleased with man. To be sure, man is a sinner and needs salvation. He is ruined and needs a redeemer. But let us ever remember that in the process of being made, man passed through divine hands. Man in his fall never forfeited his possibilities, nor did he sever God’s responsibility to man. Do not think God is well pleased with man because he is not as black as he could be. God is well pleased with us, because of the fathomless possibilities of human nature which rise to magnificent humanity when called by His voice to meet His challenge of confidence and expectation toward us. While praying, you and I feel our greatest worth to God. This is His assurance that He is well pleased. About us, around us, oft hang the gray clouds of self-abasement, but never are these gray clouds present in the moment of prayer,—that is the moment of golden confidence. “This is my beloved Son,” he has fulfilled the hope of God, justified His confidence, met His expectation. Man on his face in the closet, praying, in spite of his ruined and ravaged self, in spite of his wounds,

and wastes, has the confidence to hear His Father say, "Thou art my beloved, in spite of the habit of man to make light of thy fellowship with me and mine with thee. Thy Father is well pleased." This is God's assurance to His Child Redeemed.

When the foot has stumbled and the head has turned and the heart has failed, you and I go staggering with a blindly broken spirit to the hour of prayer, out from the heavens, out of the blue Infinite, comes a voice, comes our Father's tenderest whisper,—“Thou art beloved, I am well pleased.”

The bruised and bleeding and holy Stephen kneels and cries while praying, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge,” and with a white light on his martyr's face, looking steadfastly into heaven, he saw the glory of God and Jesus standing, and said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.”

When faith is stoned and stunned and scourged, see the heavens open and hear the orchestration of heaven's supremest melody singing its song to us,—“Thou art my beloved, I am well pleased!”

Once that gentlest of spirits in English prose,—Charles Lamb,—wrote to his friend, Coleridge, expressing the hope that he might recall his mother for a single moment and beg forgiveness. Poor, gentle, sensitive Charles Lamb, caretaker of a second-childhood father, tender nurse to an intermittently insane sister, renouncer of a hope to marry while under this cross, gentle Charles Lamb, what

would that mother say? With her thin feeble hand she would brush back the care from your white forehead and whisper in the secret places of your sensitive soul, with not a word of censure for your little faults, "Charles, thou art my beloved, I am well pleased." That would be his assurance. And to us there comes, while praying, to the wounded heart, balm; to the lonely spirit, a presence, and to the sensitive self, assurances,—“My beloved, I am well pleased.”

While praying comes the plenitude of God, and the partial visions caught in the closet will ever enlarge till the eternal soul of man goes leaping on along the endless golden strand.

IX

THE LYRIC OF OLD AGE

Psalm 23.

IN Jean Millet's familiar painting, "The Angelus," there is portrayed a harvest field with two low-browed peasants in the foreground, reverently bowed in worship. At some distance is a fainter outline of a village church. A perfect calm pervades each detail and the whole scene seems to be at peace. An eminent critic was asked his opinion of the painting, and when he beheld it, after quiet contemplation for a brief space, spoke reverently, "I hear the Angelus bell." This bell was rung at the morning, noon and night, and men knew by this sign that thousands lifted their voices at this time in the hymn of the Annunciation. And I feel when we read or chant or meditate upon this Shepherd Psalm of David, we can hear faintly the harp of the Sweet Singer of Israel, bringing together in one perfect poem the Shepherd days of his ruddy youth with a prophetic imagery of Him who came to be "the Good Shepherd of the Sheep." This twenty-third Psalm is the Angelus bell of the Old Testament, rung in the twilight of its greatest poet's life, which, when we hear, calls us to bow in adoring worship.

Upon one of those sweet Judean days in the springtime, with fresh-scented winds sweeping up to his palace, David sits at the dusk, offering up the melody of his harp in worship to God. The browsing sheep yonder on the sloping green, and the Shepherd moving swiftly about to herd them ere he leads them home through the fast-filling shadows, brings to David's mind his Shepherd's days—just as fancy brings to you and me the light of other days—perchance the old log schoolhouse, the ringing of the village bell, or “the scent of hay-fields or of summer rains.” David sees the canvas of his youth unroll,—green pastures, still waters, the limpid eyes of his tender sheep following him—their Shepherd—and then, as the day wanes, and the arches of his palace throw their slender shadow-ghosts eastward, and the clear Judean sky fills up with a murky haze, tinted with the red of the dying sun, suddenly to the Shepherd-bard, the scene is changed—deep gorges with sloping sides indented here and there with dark caves, heavy growths in the dark passes, the barking of hungry wolves and the covered stealth of the robber, harrow his vision with fears, and David's mind is drawn to his simple loving, frightened sheep, huddling about him with a complacent calmness, and a surety of trust in their leader, and with an inspiration which is born of Jehovah, he strikes his harp and sings this Psalm:

“The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul; He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

The Psalm may be broken up into a simple and brief analysis. The first verse is the theme of the whole Psalm,—“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.”—Confident trust in Jehovah for all things. The second and third verses, “He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters; He restoreth my soul; He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake;” this is trusting Jehovah in prosperity, which is humility.

The fourth and fifth verses, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies. Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over;” this is trusting Jehovah in adversity, which is humiliation.

The sixth verse is the Doxology, in which David draws aside the veil of the future and looks into the Eternal Courts.

Trust in God—Trust when things are bright, with humility; trust when things are dark, though humiliated; trust through the length of days.

This is not the lute song of a Shepherd lad, crude in the lessons of life; it is a lyric of old age, an idyl of a Shepherd-King, whose journeys had been many, into whose life had come many shadow-vales, and who had often been compassed about with enemies,—and now with a long life tempered by experience, he sings this song of rest and trust:

Verse 1. “*The Lord is my Shepherd*,”—so has the figure run through all Scripture because it interprets the life of the Hebrew people,—nomadic wanderers with flocks through years of desert life. Abraham and Isaac tended their flocks in the desert, and thus became wealthy keepers of sheep.

A good shepherd must attend his flocks at all times. In the early morning the shepherd’s call sets on the move his flock; the pleasant pastures of the noon day must be carefully chosen, at evening straight paths must be selected and a safe journey must be made, and then through starless nights the vigilant shepherd must keep watch over his flock.

“The Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

But he that is an hireling, and not the Shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

I am the Good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.”

Jesus Christ never led a sheep into a briar patch, or turned a deaf ear to its bleating of distress.

And the sheep are so foolish, the lambs so tender. No creature is quite so silly as the sheep. They will wander off into the thorns and brush and become entangled so that they cannot find their way back. They will in no wise resist the ensnaring one, and even before their shearers they are dumb. The sheep is the type of helplessness and the symbol of trust. It was the insufficiency of David that urged him to trust in Jehovah. We, like sheep, are gone astray. We are helpless, very. When the Good Shepherd came He found His own as having no shepherd and scattered, but He had compassion upon them and gathered them together, but at a time when some of them would go back with pathos, He said to the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" And Simon Peter spoke, feeling as you feel and as the world feels in its helpless estate, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou has the words of eternal life." Again the true sheep knows no stranger and the Shepherd's voice is sweet music which calleth them back.

"And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they knoweth his voice.

And a stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers."

"*I shall not want.*"—In a palace with plenty, yet this king says I shall desire nothing, because I am a sheep of the Good Shepherd. What did

he mean? He meant that palaces and kingdoms are but sordid lucre when compared with the peace of conscience and the security which comes through the love of the Shepherd.

“Is not the life more than meat, and the body more than raiment?”

Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?”

“I shall not want” is the cry of insufficiency. It is the testimony of an old man who knows of the fullness of Jehovah. It is the refrain of the believer only. The “heathen heart who puts its trust in tubes of steel and iron shard” cannot sing this song, “I shall not want.” Buddha’s priest cannot say, “I shall not want,” but better can they say with that hopeless Indian woman, “Good teacher, the Indian people are a feeble people, born lame and they shall never walk.” The disciples of Confucius cannot say, “I shall not want,” for swarming in their misery to the temple of mystery, millions are groping their way through the darkness, if perchance they may find some doorway leading to a land of light. You sometimes can say, “I do not want.” Often you must make of your study or closet a Gethsemane, and with head buried in hands cry, “Oh, Lord, thy people are hungry and I have not with which to feed them.” Often men are sick at heart and want medicine. Often wounded of spirit and they want balm. Tired and

they want sleep. Hungry and they want to be fed. Weary and they want rest. Burdened and worried and they want peace. And in those moments, the temple trumpets sound and the timbrels cry aloud and the congregation of Israel chanteth well, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." "When I sent you," said our Lord to His apostles, "without purse and scrip and shoes, lacked ye anything?" and they said, "Nothing." So many things disturb our rest, but so many are the visions that we have. Sometimes when hunted and harassed and hounded, come our most exalted joys. Sometimes when imagination plays over the fairest bowers of a fancied Eden, come the finest experiences and visions of the cross. Sometimes in sorrow, come these visions of satisfied wants. We stand at the open grave and fold our calm, silent sorrow to our bosom and weep through the vision of the resurrection. But whence is our help? Up among the hills, where a voice ever is calling and a heart ever singing to earth-wearied men:

"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden and I will give you rest."

Verse 2 and 3. And now the second and third verses—"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake."

Here is a picture. The sheep frolicking—the shepherd's bright coloured robe spread upon the

green meadow land,—still waters and straight smooth paths. Here is sunshine without its shadows—And even the psalmist trusts in Jehovah. It is much harder to think of trusting when the sky is blue overhead than when the clouds are lowering. In sunshine we do not feel our need, but in shadows we are driven to trust. This is not the note of a shepherd lad—ah, no—that lad's heart must be broken and tears must be wrung from his soul before he can know what the fullness of trust in his Lord must mean. Humility is trusting Jehovah when we do not feel we have to. Humiliation is trusting when we can do naught else. Catch this discrimination. Two godly parents lose an only child. They are meek at the voice of Providence and cry, "The Lord gave and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord." Very good. But this is not humility. It is humiliation. They have been struck and they bow. Humiliation is the whine of the dumb beast that is beaten. Humiliation is the whimper of the brute under its master's lash. But humility is the cry of John the Baptist when the multitude would call him the Christ. "He must increase, but I must decrease." Humility is the prayer of Cardinal Sarto, late Pius X, when they offered him the papal chair and rule over millions of subjects, "Let this cup pass from me. I am not worthy, I am not worthy." Here is this king in his palace with a kingdom, but the humble cry, "Thou hast given him his heart's

desire, and hast not withholden the requests of his lips."

But again to the picture. The shepherd leads his flock into pastures of tender grass upon which even the tenderest lambs may munch and munch and be fed, and unto pasture-grass which is not covered here and there with bits of sharp twigs and briars and flint, but it is grass good to rest upon. How the Lord does lead us into the most beautiful of Christian experiences, upon which we may find rest for our weary souls. But the Good Shepherd does more. He selects his pasture, not where the steady roar of the cataract, tumbling over precipices and fluttering its thousand feet of lace, reflects and flashes the sunlight upon the resting flock, but the waters are waters of quietness and the rest of the flock is tranquil. How marred would be the pleasant experiences of life if the ever-present voices of a quietless conscience were reflecting upon our memory each misdeed and unholy thought.

"For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

But always allurements are in our way and we yield. Now to the restlessness that wishes better pastures now to the call of the ensnarer. But the Shepherd comes to us and finds us. We have gone into the desert sometimes and He searches for us. Sometimes we have fallen into the deepest ravine, and when in the evening, we grow lonely and cold

and helpless, we can hear the voice of the Shepherd singing on the highest height, calling us back to the fold. "Wa-hoo-o-o, wa-hoo-o-o," we hear sung from the lips of the Shepherd, and if we do not turn homeward the Good Shepherd comes and folds the tenderest lambs to his bosom and bears them over the rocks safe again into the soft meadow grass. And at evening we start on the journey home,—and the paths are smooth and straight. Once I was summering in the valley of Virginia, in the high picturesque hills about Luray, and there was a rough, rocky road that led to the town. My host said to me as we rumbled over an exceedingly rough road, "Do you notice how hard travelling we have on this piece of road? Often Colonel Blank visits here with his invalid wife, and whenever she is to make a trip to the town, the colonel spends all of the preceding day in the blazing sun picking these stones out of the road that his wife might have a smooth path to travel to the city."

That is the figure of the Good Shepherd. He has worn his fingers to the bones picking out the stones and rocks and snares that his own sheep might have a smooth path to find their way back to the cross. These paths are not sharp, rough ways that bruise the feet and lacerate the body, not paths, the thickets of whose sides are beset by the glaring eye of the marauder, but they are paths of safety, which we follow with assurance because we know the name of our leader. A name in the Scripture

stands for three things. A character, a person, a plea. He leads us in paths of righteousness because of His character, because our God is a holy God, and because He is a holy God, His moral goodness changeth not. He leads us in the right way by His hand, for His perfect purity is become infinite power to keep us in the path of love. A name also stands for a person. "Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name." For His name's sake, He personally leads us along life's journey. And a name stands for a plea. Paul pleaded that he was a Roman. Our plea is, "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling." He leads me in paths of righteousness because my plea is "O Lord, thou art my Shepherd, lead me on."

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."

The day was waning, the sun was set and the purple twilight had come over the singer. It is easier to trust in the darkness than in the light, for we want something to lean upon then; but it is hard, very hard, to follow the Shepherd when we can barely see him in the vale of shades. Peter followed his Lord afar off when he was taken prisoner, but that was human nature more than sinfulness. When the way to Jerusalem is green with

palm branches, and white with discarded garments, and the air is vibrant with the chorus, "Hosannah to the son of David. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," it is easy to sing with the multitude. But when the night is cold and the light is dim and the court is ablaze with the fire of hatred against your best friend, it is hard to follow a crownless king to his judgment. David had passed through the gorges but never fails to trust though brought low to earth:

"If I stoop
Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud,
It is but for a time; I press God's lamp
Close to my breast; its splendour, soon or late,
Will pierce the gloom; I shall emerge one day."

Here again is a picture. The dark is coming over the flock. They come close to the Shepherd. Sometimes in the sombre silence there is heard alone the heavy tramp of the sandal of the Shepherd and the hundred footsteps of the sheep. Now the frightened sheep hear the thumping of their quickened heartbeats, the flowing of the stream through the ravine, the crumpling of twigs and leaves, the crashing of a branch, are magnified into great perils. The yelping of hungry wolves, the flashing eyes of the prowling beasts, the passing into the dark places, try the sheep to keep near their Shepherd leader, but they are not fearful, for the strong staff of the Shepherd beats back the beast, and his rod draws back again the straggler to the

path. The sheep are conscious of their Shepherd's care and presence.

“Only Heaven is better than to walk
With Christ at midnight over moonless seas.”

Now in the fifth verse many hold that the figure changes to that of a host and his guest. The Psalmist changes his figure thrice they say:—Jehovah as a provider; Jehovah as a guide, and Jehovah as a host. The figure is one though its phases change. The psalm is a poem and from the point of view of art, idyllic construction will admit of but the one figure, though this is capable of development as the Psalmist does.

The Lord as a Shepherd is the figure, and the banquet is introduced to dignify the sheep. Even when the wolves are on the plateau and the thieves in the thickets are planning about their fires, the good shepherd gives his sheep protection just as a host must give his guests protection. Thou anointest my head with oil, and thou dost put balm upon the galled places, thou anointest the head of the sheep with oil to mitigate the sun's rays, just as the host anoints his guest and my cup, the cup of the sheep, as the cup of the guest, is full to overflowing. Here the danger of the deep valley, the sharp spear of the enemy, and the sunlight of adversity, but the psalmist sings of plenty and trust that waneth not. This valley is not death, but it is that valley through which you often pass with

heavy heart and crushed spirit. This table is spread in the dark cave whence we flee those who seek our soul to devour it, from which Hope seeth no star. This sun is the livid heat upon the white desert sand "a dry and thirsty land where no water is." But the Shepherd is there in the valley watching, in the cave providing, and in the desert bringing joy. Oh, the joy of knowing that our Shepherd is near! I was once in a home in the Wissahickon section and a little girl and I became the fastest of chums, and once when I had been preparing for the evening meal, she came running into my room just as I turned out the light. Immediately she was frightened and cried out in her distress. But I reassured her and reached for her groping hand, I found it and folded it in mine. And as she held ever so tight my hand she said, "Oh, it is all right now," and the dark of that room was as the light of day to her.

"We older children grope our way
From the dark behind to the dark before
And only when our hands we lay,
Dear Lord, in thine, the night is day
And there is darkness nevermore."

And now the postlude. Gray mist is filling the meadow-land, and the shepherd with his flock is retreating over the hill. The lyre is silent, the singer has ceased his song—but yonder on the purple hilltops the sunlight still lingers and hope swiftly moving sees through the veil of the present

and the lyre breaks out in a melody divine and the psalmist sings:

“Surely goodness and mercy
Shall follow me all the days of my life.”

Ah, this matter of resting well, in the Courts of the Eternities! The goodness of God is what He does for us, objectively. His mercy is what lies in His heart of hearts. The full want of many of us is not met by the abundance of good things, but our yearning spirits must reach upward and outward until we feel the nature of our God answering and satisfying. These subjective convictions within us are but the correlatives of the fact that Jesus is the Good Shepherd; the objective fact of the Christ is the fulfillment of our subjective hope. Man's supremest delight is felt when God and man are met together, when goodness and mercy “kiss each other.” This is the vision of the true mystic who is caught up into paradise and hears words unlawful for man to utter, “I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

“If thou art worn and hard beset
With sorrows that thou wouldst forget.”

I am sure you and I may read this Shepherd Psalm and be satisfied, may we not? I am sure that when our lives are tuneless and we long for melody, we shall come to this Psalm and place our ear close to the shepherd's harp and hear him sing. Shall we not go away with a firmer faith and a surer trust? I am sure we shall, shall we not?

X

THE CONSECRATION OF CHANGE

"Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God."—PSALM 55:19.

"Meddle not with them that are given to change."—PROVERBS 24:21.

THE only world factor that has not changed in the last century is the church. Science of to-day could not be identified by the science of a century ago. The drift of governments toward democracy has come in the later years. Pure food legislation, control of industry and transportation have changed the entire field of commerce. The common demand for reform in political life has brought a new personnel into the senate chambers. The church alone has failed to put itself to the consecration of change. It has not even allowed itself to look into its own affairs. The church has not become scummed by stagnation, but it has lulled itself into the complacency of casting no shadow by reason of change. There is a consecration in complacency as well as a consecration in change. Who would doubt the noble consecration of John Calvin while consigning infants to hell, or of preachers of a half century ago in the fervent defense of slavery, or the none the less honest con-

secession of church members in this day who complacently postponed national prohibition of the liquor traffic because the loss in revenue would be unsettling? But we have fallen upon a day that calls us to the everlasting principle of change, the attitude of tolerant expectancy of development in every world factor afield, the devotion to the duty of deviating when the unseen forces of heaven and earth are making a new North Star and a corresponding compass. It is a peril to follow a standard compass when conditions which have made possible the standard are in the hands of heaven and the fingers of God are setting new points in the firmament above and through the tides below.

THE CRISIS OF CHANGE

They fear not God who have no changes, for God has changed. First revealing himself in the glory-showing stars, and then dedicating himself to a new policy he called Abraham to be the prophet of the Invisible, and still again he chose the Christ and the Cross to make perfect what manner of God he is. This was the Changeless Jehovah's consecration to change. These crises come to nations, wooing them to change. A crisis came to Israel when they became international, and their neighbours had kings. The crisis was the chance to build a democracy under the fear of God over all or fall into the complacent custom of having a king. They failed of their chance, and even to this day the

world is wearying of the kings that Israel chose. A king is a symbol of a nation's consecration to complacency.

Had not the crisis of a change come long before Luther to the Roman Church? Had not Huss and Wyclif flung new stars of ecclesiasticism in the heavens? Had not the compass points been magnetized by the new unfettering of the mind? Had not the freshly placarded lanes through the ocean beckoned men to travel to new worlds? All the while the Church burned men at the stake, tortured them with thumb screws, and gloried in its complacent consecration. But climbing the Sancta Scala, the open-souled monk saw the crisis of the Church and dedicated himself to the consecration of change, consuming himself with the best visions of his time, which, however, long ago ceased to satisfy the best visions of our time, for the world falls with frequency upon the crisis of change.

Columbus dreaming of worlds and worming his way through musty books of discovery came to the crisis of hugging the white fringes of the coast or opening his sails by faith to the breezes of a wide and uncharted sea. His voyage was the consecration to change in the science of sailing the seas. And none the less to the souls of men the crisis of change is ever calling. The earth has fallen upon this crisis in a war. Where doth the soul of man seek to find itself to-day? In the complacency of the old landmarks of wealth and academics and

might, or in a new consecration to change to goodness rather than gold, to intellectualism with sympathy rather than to the cold pride of learning, or to the gentleness of living rather than to the bluster of plumes?

The soul must oftentimes turn suddenly on the devil of complacency and thrust in his face the "everlasting nay," if it is to enter with consecration into the path that divides at the cross-roads of the crisis of change.

THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE

They have no changes because they fear not God. Only brave men fear God; the faint in heart fear folks. Changes come to those alone who have a changeless faith in God. I venture to question whether a single church existing to-day fears God pre-eminently. They fear lest their fame shall dim, or their pastor shall not yield to their complacencies, or that they must hear dull homilies. So they cling to their traditions and customs. Brother Luther feared God and took up the challenge of a changed creed. Erasmus set upon the policy of trimming his sails to the winds. But Luther's ship sailed into the unknown waters despite the winds. The Royal Youth, leaping in eagerness to win life's greatest quest, faltered when Jesus said, "Sell all and follow where fearless faith leads." The challenge of a great change had

found a sorrowful refusal in a rich, royal and righteous faint-at-heart.

In a Boston burial ground there is an enclosed grave lot. The iron fence is warping and rusting and crumbling after only seventy years. On the iron gateway to the lot is moulded the caption, "Never to be disturbed," the epitaph of a timorously complacent soul fearful of the world he was leaving behind. The challenge to change has come to the church. Soldiers of the Great Upheaval are accepting the challenge, and are finding the Christ of the highway crucifix to be the Christ of a guileless experience in a changed viewpoint of life. It is the new birth of a changed heart. There need be no anxious moments as to what the soldiers did with the New Testaments that the churches sent them. Better be anxious to keep a companion Testament for each one sent abroad and read it ourselves lest we be unfamiliar with the helping spirit and the sacrificial sacraments that its pages uncovered to the men overseas. The complacent critics of the soldiers' morals are running after will-o'-the-wisps. "They are chasing fireflies in the valleys, while the men over there in France are on the heights, face to face with the stars and with God."

To-day I looked on the fearless sea, its tide ever changing, itself unchanged. The sand dunes, too, were unafraid, defiant of the winds, though blown from defense to defense in changing ridges. Along the shallow beach the "silver shiners" were swim-

ming, and with the resurging tide were caught un-alert and stranded. How frantic is the struggle as this one beats its body on the wet sand in an effort to swim back into the changing tide. Alas! it is left alone in the sun in silvered silence. Its tide has gone out. Fancy sees the drama of a heedless conservative or an adventuresome liberal in the church pew, or maybe in the pulpit, or some doctor in the schools of the churches, who has the complacent habit of swimming in the shallows. He is now perilously near a resurging tide. The changing waves wait not to enfold his shining theories to its bosom, but leave him upon the strand of the changeless sea. The challenge to God-fearing, thinking leaders of men is the challenge to change. The truths of God are the unchanging sea; its tides our petty faiths.

The church too long has practised the complacent custom of laying up its great wealth. Its boasted and boastful underwriters are serenely rich, but this war has challenged all men to make secure not by intrinsic investments, but to lay up treasure by laying out treasure. "The soldiers and sailors are giving their bodies, they are giving their sight, everything but their souls—those they are not giving, but finding." The church must give less of censure and more of forgetting; less of pride and pretense and more of penitent prayer; less of securing and more of scattering; less of the fear of their fellows and more of the fear of God.

In these latter years we have sought to spin a theological and ecclesiastical web about the church crammed by our dogmas into a cocoon of our own making. But the challenge of an awakening morn is warming the church to its new life, the chrysalis is stirring and he who listens now can hear the crackling of its wings. The church is changing its winter's sleep for fearless flight.

THE CONSECRATION OF CHANGE

We have always thought of consecration as a heroic allegiance to the forms of Christianity—a consecration that never missed a church service, and walked miles through winter and summer to a class of boys and gave liberally out of a scanty store, enough to rival the gifts of the rich. Our standards of consecration have been cast about the virtue of doggedly holding on.

A new crisis flings the challenge to change—the virtue of letting go—as the new standard of consecration. Some things must always be held tightly; some things must be held lightly. Consecration yesterday was a quality found chiefly in those who were able to see. To-day one's consecration must be able to sever. To leave the wharves to which we have always moored our ships and face uncertain winds and tempests is the unrelenting challenge to the new consecration. Preachers have known all along that few were giving ear to their words, but it was of little concern to us because we lived in

the triumphant hope of getting along somehow. We all believed the world would get on its way whether the preacher carried his point or not. But after to-day, after this war of great and epochal change, if the preacher gets back to his point it will make a difference—a tragic matter whether the complacent congregation listen to him or not. The difference will be the difference between vines with figs, and crackling twigs. I am sure that an unawakened church in this great day will be a church impotent to mould its generation for a century to come. The church will continue to exist like the feeble folks of the incurable wards. Death will not prevail, but the pity of the invalidism!

To what manner of change must the church dedicate its new career? We may be sure the church will never be asked to give up a single truth it has ever held, but its creeds have not always been its truths. Certainly, first of all, there must come from the church a new emphasis on applied Christianity. This emphasis will be to exalt the emotional side of Christianity rather than its scholastic philosophy. This noble word “emotion” really means “to set on the move.” France gave to Europe the university and the crusade, not because the university caused the crusade, but because the soul of a crusade gives to a nation the right to found a school. Christianity’s passion lies not in weeping, but in working under its own enthusiasm. Who cares—and much less does God care—for a

teacher in a classroom who knows all the facts, but never dreams of the power to warm his facts into enthusiasm by the glow of a flaming heart? The new consecration is the change from indifference to initiating sympathy; from a monastery cell to the market-places of human simplicities; from the learned professor to the learning prophet; out from the academies to walk the highways of men, and love and live and learn and laugh.

The Christian church will be beaten to its knees unless it drops voluntarily upon them and questions its own spiritual integrity. There is perhaps not a single church in the world with more than half its efficients utilized. The discipline of armies will teach the church to account for all of its resources. Our new consecration will sever the broken limbs, the empty branches, the bland leaves spreading themselves along fruitless boughs and cast them into a tempest of hurtling flames, even consuming the motes of the atmosphere until it is clean. Love will do it; the honest spirit of inherent inquisition will do it. The world will pale at the splendours of the church purged of half its slacking professors, having rediscovered its power to speak and command attention, to move together and mould the universe to its benignant will, offering no apology for its existence, making no defense of its integrity, but gathering the earth at its feet by captivating charm of its spiritual fervour.

The Changeless Christ—the same yesterday, and

to-day, and forever—becomes through the centuries the Changing Christ. As his eternal brotherhood is enshrined in the hearts of all the nations, Christ is formed in us, shining through and transforming into his own image the Indian disciple, the Congo devotee, the Korean priest, the scout of the plains, the English statesman, the princes of the tribes of men.

But this unchanging inter-racial bond—the life of all men everywhere—has come to another crisis, that out of a tragic war, challenges the world to lead to oneness the ever-changing in triumphant anthem about the throne of the Changeless Christ.

XI

THE CHARM OF THE UNCHANGING

"If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle."—I COR. 14:8.

THE World War taught us how very easily can the God of War change his shining glamour to ghastly grayness. We learned in the wonder days of childhood that War rode on a prancing steed, and he brandished a gleaming sword, and helmet was shone never so bright as his; but we have learned that the last few years have unvisored his ugly face, and we know now he wields a sword red with blood and his helmet is old with rust, and he rides upon a dragon breathing from his nostrils poisoned gas and the breath of hell. War has taught us to change our worship of the God of War and wave him adieu forever. But the war has taught us to sound afresh a note of certainty in trumpeting this age to re-establish its faith in those verities which are unchanged and unchanging.

Vast strata in the structure of the world's civilization have been shifted by the events among the nations in this time. Nations have trembled in fear of ruin, monarchs have grown pale at the stalking figure of world democracy. The Church

itself, in moments of the world's worst paroxysms has been charged with failure, and weakness, and pathetic invalidism. These years have been years of uncertainty in the world's thinking, unrest in faith, disquietude in the State, uneasiness in the pulpit, and anxious care has all but corroded the heart of Christianity itself. Men have strung aeolian harps across the windows of their houses, waiting for the fugitive winds of the world to beat out some kind of a melody that would bring to them once again the charm of peace and security, but the music has been fitful and discordant and uncertain. What this age of man has been longing for is a trumpet's blast, the unmistakable note of a bugle sound, calling the world back to faith and foundations, to God and truth and hope and heaven, to Christ and the certainty of the triumph of Christianity. We are longing now for a return of the charm that lends itself to the unchanging. This is not a time when mere declaration of dogma palliates the anxieties of men, but our day is a clear challenge for men to review and renew their convictions on some of the fundamental problems of the ages. Christianity with its great fundamental doctrines of life is not even obscured by the red mists that rise out of the trenches of the European war; Christianity is secure, unassailable, increasingly unimpeachable. Far and away above the confusion of our day, Christianity is closing up to its day of glory.

THE CHANGING CENTURIES

In the present age science has opened the door of Nature's Arcanum and discoveries have so rapidly been flashed on the dull mind of the world that the world has grown confused. "If present-day conclusions in science flatly contradict the conclusions of science fifty years ago, what of the uncertain future days"? the bewildered man is asking. "If we were frightened by Charles Darwin in his marvelous researches and observations, how shall we get back to the great note of certainty that blasts out of the first verse of our Book of Faith: 'In the beginning, God created heaven and earth'?" Such are the questions that have made our day a day of nervous and fickle uncertainties. The discovery of the germ theory of disease sent our windows wide open for the cure of tuberculosis, where the windows had been closed before to retain a stifling and stale air which we thought was soothing to the diseased lungs. The science of pedagogy came into our classrooms and changed entirely and fundamentally our age-long method of "learning how to read," and we stood aghast. By the study of the great spiritual verities of Jesus' teaching, our age has abandoned largely the fire of hell, but has substituted for the burning flames a spiritual fire ten thousand times more fearful than fire. Science has taught us the certainty of the truth, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also

reap." More changes have occurred in the last quarter of a century in the United States than in the entire period from Washington to Lincoln. In a day when the ancient Chinese has clipped his pig-tails, and railroads are threading like silver wires the entire country of the long hermit-secluded world, when the national kimono is giving way to the militant khaki and the Chinese Empire has flowered into the fair blossom of a modern republic, certainly the world has gone topsy-turvy and the age in which we find ourselves has become an age of uncertainty.

With Emmanuel Kant asserting that the only things we can ever really know are things as they appear to us and we can never be sure that the appearance is the same as reality, and with Hegel declaring, with the adoption by many new cults of our day, that there is no reality beyond appearance, our age is a clamour for the note of certainty of belief in the Bible as the Word of the Living God, in Jesus the world's sufficient Saviour, and for a calming of the spirit of unrest into a spirit of confidence and quietness in the unmovable, unimpeachable truth of Christianity as its final and unfailing truth. The roots of uncertainty run down, after all, into the spirit of man and the most profound truths of man lie in the realm of faith, not reason; in the realm of the soul, not in the classrooms of man's understanding.

THE INTEGRITY OF THE BOOK

In the last fifty years the Bible has been under fire and crossfire. In the light of its vital message to-day, in the light of its unstained integrity, in the light of its note of certainty with which the trumpet blasts of the Bible sets forth its authority. "In the beginning God," no disciple of the most scullion-like understanding need have a fear of the failure of this Book.

The mad God of War has taken time from feeding on the red pulp of four million dead soldiers to grant an armistice to the friends of the Bible, and in every trench, under the rude sleeping bunks, in the crannies of the earth, in the knapsack of soldier and on the white covering of hospital beds, the Bible to-day has gone back to the uprooted growth of civilization to re-establish the world in the God of the Book and the Christ of the Cross.

One sign of the unsettled age in which we live is the growing tendency to put all world religions upon the same plane of value. Men in their uneasiness and, indeed, in their silly truckling and seeming tolerance, are summoning us to the lofty ethics of Confucius and the beautiful mysticism of Buddha and the practical values of Judaism. To be sure, there is a proper challenge in the study of comparative religions, and when Jacob Chamberlain, that careful appreciative student of religions of the East, had disclosed one day in Madras some of the finest sentiments of the Eastern religions, a

Brahman arose and said, "Sir, whence did you cull all these beautiful utterances? I never knew our Vedas and our poets contained such gems," and the old Christian teacher then said, "He knew not the weeks of patient toil required in searching through bushels of rubbish to find those pearls." Comparative religions but emphasize the matchless worth of Jesus as the world's one Redeemer from Sin. The legend is told of Lucifer, the fallen angel, that when they asked him what he most missed of everything in heaven whence he had been cast out, he cried, "I miss most the sound of the trumpets in the mornings." The note of uncertainty which has crept into the religious thinking of both pulpit and pew in our day is, doubtless, leaving the bewildered laymen to wonder whether to expect an eclipse of the Christ as the one necessary and irrefutable refuge of the human soul.

THE AVAILABLE SAVIOUR

If Jesus is not the only Saviour of the world, our great, sad world has fallen upon a hopeless estate. If Buddha can offer salvation to the great race of men, we need build our hopes for a social order no higher than the industrial mill system of Japan, where eighty per cent of the girls under fifteen years of age are driven into the mill compounds to grind out an existence at the wheels. Sixty per cent of them either die in the nameless insanitation of the mill housings or go into a life

of ill-repute. Forty per cent return home, but either maimed for life or physically unfit for further labour. Never a voice of protest rises from the best religion that Japan can boast. If Confucius, after twenty-three hundred years has a message for the world, America can dream of no higher conception of womanhood than that her women can have no destiny here or hereafter except as she is allied to man. Jesus has made His matchless march through the centuries, "the light that came to lighten every man that cometh into the world;" before Him darkness has slipped away and the nations have had a great light to shine upon them, not a single pathway down which He has led His people has either been infested with thorns in its hedges or beset by stones in the way, the heavens before Him have been spangled with stars of hope to every people, and His claim to be "the bread that came down from heaven," "the Water of Life whereof if a man drinketh, he shall never thirst," the challenge to the weary "to come unto Him and find rest," and finally, His divine declaration that "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life, no man cometh unto the Father but by Me."—These mighty claims unimpeached, proven without a shadow of a doubt, remaining—by the cumulative experience of His disciples from the Hill of Golgotha to the scarred battle-fields of the present day—mark Jesus as the world's only refuge from sin. Poor, blighted, broken, bruised, ravaged, wrecked,

vagrant and vanquished humanity find in Jesus Christ their certainty of trust and faith and salvation.

THE CRUSADING CHURCH

One of the greatest marks of a superficial and drifting age is the frantic and feverish clamour after institutionalism in religion. To-day they are clouding the issue of the Christ and its pre-eminent importance in the life of the centuries by the nebulous multitudinous forms of institutions for social service apart from and semi-hostile to the Church of Jesus Christ. We cannot substitute the settlement house that is built on the religion which may be found in a cake of soap for the unconquerable Church which is the sponsor of the sinewy faith that vitalizes all service to man or God. The Church is finding herself to-day to be a Church of the open eye and the reaching hand and the lifting heart. The bad air that breathes out of the dingy cubicle of the tenement house is calling to-day like the winds of God for the Christian tenement-house owner to right his wrongs; the long hours and double-up strain of big business stenographers are putting into the hand of the preacher of our day a lash by which he is breaking the unreasoning will of the Church officer, who, for the toil of business efficiency sets his Christianity on a vacation from Monday morning to Saturday night. The Church has no countenance for Christianity which is not

applied Christianity. Without the Church, social conditions would fester and humanitarian cults and nondescript sects would fag into such spineless vitality that protest would thin away into desuetude.

The Church needs no apologists to-day. The Christian ministry need not offer a brief for its trumpet note. Carlyle has summed it up for our age. "I wish he could find the point again, this speaking one, and stick to it with tenacity, with deadly energy, for there is need of him yet."

The Church has lighted every light that lines the dark streets of our city; the Church has cleansed every reeking alley that has been transformed into a boulevard of commerce. The Church has given bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, a lint bandage to the wounded, heaven to the hopeless and a burial for the dead. This age has its ear still open to the changeless message of the prophet of the Church of the Living God. "Inasmuch as ye do it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye do it unto me."

The nervous, unanchored faith of our day is continually finding expression in such cults and sects and theological extravaganzas as would offer a panacea for all sin when the only panacea is the forgiving grace of God. Again the illogical theorist would wave away sin as non-existent, while all the time his sermons direct us how to be rid of its effects.

THE UNCHANGING CHRIST

I do not hesitate to sound the note of the certainty of sin as the most terrible fact in the history of the souls of men, and the Unchanging Christ alone is able to break its power. Whether sin be the gross shattering of the laws of God or of man; whether it be the willful closing of the soul to the challenge of opportunity to be one's best, or whether "sin is behoovable," as Julian of Norwich has said, the great fact remains that the universal experience of the native in the undiscovered thicket of the savage tribe, to Heine the brilliant, the defiant, the master of irony, is ever the same experience, for when Heine, prone upon his "mattress of gray," suffered undescribed agony, feeling that he was forsaken by God, he exclaimed, "At last, I have to stand on the same footing with Uncle Tom."

After all, out of our uncertainties remains the certainty of Jesus of Nazareth, the world's all-embracing Redeemer. Let us go back to the apostasy of man and find him even guilty in possession of infinite possibilities and he still remains the creature for whom Jehovah can never disavow a divine responsibility, for in the process of man's being made our God cannot escape His accountability for the making; back of the apostasy to the external silences, then to the creative fiat and the birth of man, and through the years of the victory of Satan, and on still through the long years of the

toiling hand and sweating brow, through years of conflict with the tempter, through the desert of despair to the promise of a Saviour flashed out of the soul of prophets and fulfilled in the advent at Bethlehem, and on through His life, His death, His burial and His resurrection, through the years of the triumphant Church, beating at the gates of hell, then onward through the drawn veil, to the gates of pearl, to the multitude whose garments are white, washed in the blood of the Lamb, who have come up through much tribulation to the great white throne and to the Son of Man seated on the right hand of Majesty, and this is the vindication of our note of uncertainty, the justification of our creed, the proof of our confession: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." This is the matchless charm of the Unchanging Christ.

XII

THE FORGOTTEN PRINCESS

“And she called his name Moses, and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.”—EXODUS 2:10.

ONE of the sublimest moments in the history of man was the moment when humanity climbed to the heights of Sinai and bore back two tablets of stone upon which God's own finger had written the Ten Commandments, and Moses was humanity's messenger, and the commissioner of Jehovah—but the great hour had not been possible but for Pharaoh's daughter—the Forgotten Princess. Moses was the mighty man of a mighty moment, while the Princess, doubtless, with her household, lay tumbled in a sandy sepulchre at the bottom of the Red Sea.

Kings have marched their way to miracles of glory, moved to deeds by their mothers of the obscure cottage; authors have written words deathless and winsome, sustained by the unfaltering faith of a true wife. And whether it be an unmarried elder sister, or some daughter of drudgery, the glamour of great men traces back its source times without number. to the heroism of some Forgotten Princess.

THE WAIL OF A BABY

The drama of an afternoon's bath by the royal daughter, marks the beginning of the law-giver's life. The cruel Pharaoh had commanded the male children killed; a mother's heart had formed a thousand ways to hide her son, and now despairing, she thrust a floating ark, made with her hands of love, out upon the river of chance, and God's overlooking eye and the well-timed presence of Miriam, the baby's sister, and the afternoon bath of the Princess, all conspired to make Moses the leader of the chosen people of Israel, whose fadeless glory has written maybe the one golden chapter in the history of mankind. It was the wail of a child that brought the dramatic discovery of Moses. It was a baby's cry that set to throbbing the multitudinous impulses of the Princess' mother heart.

“ An infant crying in the night,
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry,”

has oft been the call of God that brought a mother's heart to fold its wings about an orphaned child. A woman's heart always finds the range of vibration when a baby wails. God-given instinct of our mothers that so subtly discovers the meaning of a baby's cry! A mother, a wife, a watching little girl, quickly reads the meaning of a sob of sorrow, or the whine of sickness, or the scream of anger,

the cry of pain, or the whimper of a little lonely heart, homesick for its absent mother.

When Luther sang his carols on the streets of Eisenach, Frau Cotta, flinging wide open her windows, perceived with her mother's sensitive soul the cry of hunger in the song of the disconsolate lad; and Luther remains forever the Great Reformer, and Frau Cotta the long Forgotten Princess.

Rugged Bill Nicoll has been a preacher now for thirty years, but once he had left his home and wife and babies in Baltimore to direct the traffic of San Francisco's horse-drawn street cars; and there came once to him a night of homesickness and a weariness of toil as he wandered from his task in the dusk of California's afterglow. And suddenly a lighted lamp became to him a beacon through the window-panes, and the laughter of children in their evening games a challenge, and the wail of a baby, called out as the voice of God, to the lone-hearted pilgrim and flashing a decision to leave his work and seek the circle of his own home, now stretched continent-wide away from his aching heart. Bill Nicoll came, guided by a baby's cry, back to home, and to Moody's tabernacle, and to God, and to the shepherd's robes, and the throbbing heart of a saint.

Wherever there is a mother with a wailing baby there is the benediction of Bethlehem. Wherever a son hangs upon a cross and a mother watches through the darkness, there is a Calvary.

THE DEPUTIES OF OUR DESTINIES

The destiny of Moses was written by Jehovah long, long before the first day-dawn flung its red streamers across a world of chaos, but the deputy into whose keeping was thrust the opening act was the Forgotten Princess.

Men rise from dirt floors to hew out the highways of state's and nation's march; to heroisms that prove the soul of men unconquerable and imperishable; their destinies read like romances enacted in personalities of brain and brawn, but the unceasing miracle of motherhood has been the deputy that God summoned to take his task instead. Witness George Herbert crying out, "A good mother is worth a hundred school-masters;" and John Henry Jowett seeking the secret of destiny in his words, "I would prefer the early guidance of an illumined father and mother to the instruction of all state teachers and official priests of Christendom;" and Saint Augustine in his confessions humbly finding the hand that had led him hitherto, "If I am thy child, O my God, it is because thou gavest me such a mother."

Nathaniel Hawthorne caught in the typhoon of a political upheaval had lost his post as surveyor of the port of Salem, Massachusetts, and leaving behind his humdrum desk and uninspiring task by the which he had eked an existence for himself and wife, he turned to tell her of the disaster that had left him hopeless and despondent. "I am without

work," he told her, "the government has changed." And she smiled upon his broken spirit and simply lighted the fire and secured a fountain of ink and clean paper and his pen, and thus she whispered to him, "Now write your book of the scarlet sin of the woman and the village minister. Happy is this release to show your genius." And Hawthorne toiled and told his story and captivated the American public and then all of the English-speaking race with his novel of "The Scarlet Letter." But the Forgotten Princess had been deputized to work out the destiny with a smile of faith and the courage of hope.

THE COMPANION OF OUR CAREERS

The Princess taught Moses all the learning of the Egyptians, and while he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer afflictions with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," it doubtless was the over-caring companionship of the Princess that kept the boy Moses close to the discipline of books.

Charles Lamb's immortal lines to Coleridge tells afresh the story of his mother's companionship in his career. "Oh, my friend! I think sometimes could I recall the days that are past, which among them should I choose? Not those 'merrier days,' not 'the pleasant days of hope,' not 'those wanderings with a fair-haired maid,' which I have so often

and so feelingly regretted; but the days, Coleridge, of a mother's fondness for her schoolboy. What would I give to call her back for one day, on my knees, to ask her pardon for all those little asperities of temper, which from time to time have given her gentle spirit pain!"

What picturesqueness gathers itself about the forgotten Princess of the parsonage; the preacher's wife! Time soon comes when the new preacher grows "dull," and they say "he lacks the human note," and still others whisper "he is commonplace like the rest," and in a short year after the preacher and the preacher's wife came afield to flowering welcomes, a tragedy which sensitive souls carry in the hidden chambers of memory has been enacted. The Forgotten Princess of the parsonage and the silent Lord alone know the bruise of the preacher's heart. One night he comes trudging home trailing tired feet through the white blowing storm, and that program of advance, that challenge to a new charge, and that enthusiasm of an idealist just finding himself, which the preacher has presented to an ill-understanding "board" of his men—these plans and hopes are like the preacher's broken spirit, all withered and smiled away. Stung and bleeding, he reveals to the preacher's wife the panorama of his defeat. His words are slow and his voice is quivering, for he doubts whether even she will understand how slow of heart are the sons of the kingdom to see. He need not to have doubted,

for in ready and unaffected sentences of thrilling confidence the preacher's wife has reanimated the breath of an expiring faith, and the gentle, glowing secret of the Lord which she now possesses has been breathed out like the atmosphere of some healing balm. The preacher's soul is still again and stayed. Then the preacher and the tranquil preacher's wife fold their broken wings about each the other, and under the shadow of the care of the Almighty who never slumbers,—they fall asleep.

II Days of victory come at last to the preacher. He thrills with a mighty sense that the God of our fathers has chosen him to mould and remake the lives of many of the sons of men. New powers flash out of his growing years, enthralling passions for his ministry to men seize upon him, and the preacher is swept along in the career of a successful pastorate to the tune of stirring trumpets. Men whisper his name. Great churches seek him for their preacher. Stories of his picturesque achievements appear on the printed page. Platforms invite him. Schools delight to honour him. Gifts make him rich. Flowers are strewn all the day along his winding lane and they scent even the hedges of his life. And so he has come into his day, and all the world is a joy, and a glory and a triumph to the preacher. He has reached the perihelion of his career, and the world is lighted with his sun. But the Princess is forgotten to the printed page. Her name is unmentioned by the

praise of lips, and she is little worshipped even by the successful preacher's flock. Hers is the task of changing the linen spread of the bed on which the preacher rests. Now she is warming the comfortable to be thrown upon him as he has fallen all of a sudden into a mid-day nap. She is selecting his wholesome food, keeping her hand on the pulse of his daily activities, watching lest he be lured into the error of overwork. She is the strange, mysterious supply that keeps his life radiant with a disguised winsomeness. Hers is the lustre that makes the golden glow of his sunlighted life. Hers is the hand that kept him strong all along the way.

THE PRINCESS AND THE PALM TREES

Led to a sacred burial by angel hands, never granted to another mortal, Moses climbs to Pisgah's heights to view before him the Land of Promise, and at his feet lies Jericho, the City of the Palm Trees. The waving of the palm trees in the valley is ever the symbol of triumph and victory to Moses as he waits the sighing of the dead march by the orchestration of the sweeping winds! Surely the palm trees suggest the Princess and the floating ark and the wailing baby—certainly to Moses, awaiting angels, came the memory of the Forgotten Princess of the Nile.

To you, Mighty Moses, soon cometh the valiant victory and the shining crown, but to the Princess is the triumph of the tranquil palms!

I think one of the grayest mornings I have ever known came after the unsullied victory of the death of my gentle father, for fifty years a preacher of Jesus. I left his fallen form to seek the house of his gentlest of life's companions—the preacher's wife. I came into her room, and saw the moaning spirit and the trammelled soul broken, but silently lighted with an unvanquished hope that looked through the open windows to the other world. Here was the preacher's wife, silent, sighing, and sometimes sobbing for the start of the caravan that should bear her over the desert just beyond which lay the city of those who conquer. As the cortege left the house of the preacher's invalid wife she waved her hand and cried gently, "Good-bye, good heart, I shall be coming soon." And then in after years the caravan came.

Side by side they lie. The good preacher and the preacher's good wife. Over them stands a granite shaft, built to keep the preacher's memory in the soul of the city he served, and on the tender green grass which covers her grave lie two branches of trailing palm leaves. And hers, as his, is now the victory and the crown and the triumph of the trailing palms.

XIII

THE HIDDEN HOST

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host."—LUKE 2:13.

P RAYER has its surprises, even as it must have its patience. One angel of God was not sufficient for the startled shepherds on the still plains of Bethlehem; this lone angel brought only fear, mingled with their panic; but when suddenly a multitude of the angelic host appeared, singing a heavenly processional, the shepherds rediscovered their lost confidence and turn with a stalwart faith toward the birthplace of Jesus.

This Christmas story is ever a charming one because the glory of angels is its background. The light of heaven streams through its beauty and simplicity. The shepherds were rugged, simple men guarding their sheep on a calm night in the mild December of Palestine. They were doubtless of the Pharisee sect, for they believed in the appearance of angels. They were, maybe, holding midnight councils, discussing the hordes that in those days were pouring along every road of Palestine toward Jerusalem, responding to the call of Augus-

tus to be enrolled. There was here and there among them a sign of sorrow that Israel was under the yoke. The freedom of the stars sang again to them the story of the Star out of Jacob. The marvelous reign of peace, through the latter few years, had brought their memories to recall Isaiah's Prince of Peace. The night had grown old, perchance, and the watches were weary and hope had grown cold and the heart was sick as this picturesque group in the silence of the night lazily watched their slumbering sheep. The eldest of the shepherds began to chant with the quietness of a pious worshipper a psalm of faith:

“He that keepeth thee will not slumber,
Behold, he that keepeth Israel
Will neither slumber nor sleep.
Jehovah is thy keeper:
Jehovah is thy shade from thy right hand.
The sun shall not smite thee by day,
Nor the moon by night.”

And the other shepherds were calmed into quiet repose, when out of the heavens there flashed a light, and an angel of the Lord stood by them. They were bewildered, confused, doubtful, and sore afraid. And the angel spake to the shepherds, “Be not afraid, there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord.” But these flock-keepers were stunned, and not a sign of faith or response did they utter. They were abashed. But suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God. Then

the memories of Israel's glory flamed again in the shepherds' hearts, faith returned, and with a full confidence they heard the morning song of this angel chorus:

"Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace among men
In whom he is well pleased."

And when the angels were gone away, they returned to Bethlehem to see these things that were told them.

So the reinforcements of God were there, drawn in celestial order just beyond the vision of these men, and when staggering doubt had given away to a new-born faith then suddenly the multitude of the angels appeared, singing of the glory of God and the birthday of the world's new hope.

THE ANGEL RESERVES

These were the youths of God, these angels; yet theirs was an age-long experience in God's service. These were the angels that sped at God's bidding in the marvelous story of Creation. This multitude had seen service on the plains of Ur, as some of them had spoken with Abraham. Theirs was the dire task of death on the Passover night. They had hovered over the armies of Israel and shown them the way to victories. They were always in the heavens. These angels are watching over us in our lonely meditations, singing to us their invisible chorus when the heart's music is mute, en-

lightening our dark paths with their unseen glory, showing us the way over the uncharted sea of life. They sing carols on Christmas morning. They stand guarding at the doors of hospitals for the sick. The earth and sea and air are their abiding places, and these angels are ever waiting to serve the bewildered host of men.

I am sure you and I have been at Dothan with Elisha and Gehazhi, his servant, and with dim eyes we have seen alone the strength of our enemies. Our city has been beleaguered, and the reserves of hope have been spent, and faith has waned. Indeed, God has been forgotten, and in those moments some prophet has shown us the reinforcements of God drawn in battle line on the hills surrounding us, and we have learned, with our eyes of faith then unsealed, that "they that be with us are more than they that be with them." This prophet has oftentimes been a humble preacher whose prayer has opened our eyes. Oftentimes our own eager petitions to God to show us light in darkness, to lessen the burdens of our shoulders, or to help us overcome in the harassing fray, have been as angels to us. Sometimes in the moment of prayer the surprise of God's reinforcements has broken in upon us when the night was dark, and the eyes of the soul had fallen asleep.

The story is told of an artist who in the long ago found an old Madonna, the finest work of its master. The painting was dim with age and ob-

scured by dust and marred by the waste hand of time. The artist with eager zeal, but despondent heart, set to retouching and re-illuminating and restoring the beauties of the masterpiece. What seemed to his eyes to be a great arch of clouds had circled the quiet splendour of the Child and Mother and Father, but as deftly he discerned the faded colours and as skillfully he restored them, suddenly the arch of clouds proved to be a chorus of cherubim and seraphim, guarding with care the birth of Jesus in the lowly manger. That old-time story is the every-day story of these lives of ours. What seem to be overhanging clouds, about to break with menace and with frown on their billowy faces, are really the invisible reinforcements of God, which when the heart has yearned and the eyes have struggled to see appear as the messengers of God singing to us their songs of light and love.

THE LIGHT AT MIDNIGHT

Now, one of the human elements about this Christmas story of the shepherds and the angels, lies in the fact that the angels came in the night; the reinforcements came when the faith had begun to wane. Certainly this was true of the world at that time. Socrates and Plato had led the people into such intellectual mazes that they were unsatisfied with the gods of Greece, and yet could not see the end of the way. They could discern the light of immortality shining on a far-off shore, but there

was no pilot to steer them over the wide, unknown sea. When Jesus brought immortality to light, this was the reinforcement of God called into the night of the world's restless faith. Israel was decadent at the time these angels sang. Now and then a noble-spirited Simeon waited for the consolation of Israel, but the heavens were arched to Israel with a cloud impenetrable. The ways of God to them were disappointing, and they were a hapless, hopeless people, watching at their humdrum tasks in the night. And then the Messiah came. Too long were they in finding it out, but the reinforcements of God came at the despairing call of receding faith. So the shepherds watched, I am sure, far into the obscure night, and were waiting now for the break, as one on a bed of fever waits for the glory of the Lord in the morning. Doubtful, disconsolate, dreary at heart, these shepherds watched their flocks by night, and then the angel came, but they were only frightened, and then the multitude of the heavenly host, God's reinforcements, filled the vast heavens with song, and the shepherds were summoned to take heart. A light broke upon them, and faith led them by the hand to the cradle of the Christ.

Just so did Lord Alfred Tennyson come into the vision of the hidden reserves that flashed into his noble mind the full glory of God. Leaving Cambridge at twenty-three, he joined himself to a small family party to travel on the Continent. In the

party was Arthur Hallam, his dear friend, whom Tennyson said was more to him than a brother. At Vienna Arthur Hallam died, and for months Tennyson was broken-spirited. Doubt mastered his moods; faith reeled under the strong hand of his friend's death. It was night, and the stars had begun to fade away one by one. Then God summoned his reserves, and Tennyson wrote his "In Memoriam," in some respects the finest exhibit of a struggling faith, in all verse. In these opening lines one may hear the voice of the heavenly host, singing a song of triumph:

Strong Son of God, immortal love
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust;
Thou madest man, he knows not why;
He thinks he was not made to die,
And thou hast made him; thou art just.

And to you and me out on the silent plains with slumbering faith and corroding doubt, the reinforcements of God come singing, and we are startled by the multifold surprises of our prayers.

THE SURPRISING SONG

And suddenly with the angel appeared the multitude of the heavenly host. One of the attractions of the stage and fiction and drama is the element of surprise. When one is bewildered by some plot, the unexpected or unannounced happening makes

the action strong. The old writer of the Proverbs says: "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing, but it is the glory of kings to search out a matter." So God has ever thus sounded the bugle note of his reinforcements, and the hearts to whose help they came have stood abashed, bewildered, often sore afraid, as were the shepherds in the Bethlehem pastures. The call of Abraham from the land of Ur, doubtless came through Abraham's searching after God, but how great was the surprise of God's call. And Moses aspiring to a nearer fellowship prays, and how is he surprised by the voice of God, calling him to lead Israel. David, in lonely nights the son of God's close companionship, prays out in the open fields, and how is he surprised when God in his own way answered his yearning soul. And witness Saul hiding away from the reinforcements of God, and yet through the years he had longed to have God's mighty strength. It is a rebuke to faith that the shepherds were sore afraid when their aspirations were fulfilled. How overjoyed often is the modern saint who has cried out, night after night through the years, perchance in prayer to God. Suddenly out of the dullness of life, the light of a messenger bearing God's thought shines upon us. We are startled. Our ecstasy knows no bounds. The prayer of years and years is answered so strangely and of a sudden. A preacher is leading a people, and some day into the drought and dryness, the unfruitfulness and failures of a pas-

torate, the tide of the Spirit pours its beneficent waters of refreshing, and the channels are swept clean, and the lush and luxuriance of the summer grows its fruitage in all the hearts of men. He is surprised that God has suddenly sent his reserves.

I have often thought how human was the experience of Christian and Hopeful in the dungeon of Giant Despair. Lost, beaten, bruised, prisoners of Despair, they spend the night in prayer, and lo, the surprise of the morning! The Key of Promise, like a mighty reinforcement, was hidden away in the folds of their garments, and suddenly they had found the way to faith and to the new path that led to the City Celestial. The reinforcements of God had come suddenly. When Jesus comes with the holy angels, we know not the hour nor the time, but we know His coming will be as the thief in the night. It will be at an hour when we think not, but His coming will have the glory of surprise about it. Perchance it will be when the world has gone to sleep, sleeping from sorrow over its tasks and toils, its tumults and tragedies. It may be when the night is obscure, and the commonplace duty of a sheep-tender has fallen to be our lot. Suddenly, when the music of life is muffled, the hills will glow with a light ineffable, and the King, in company with the glory of the angels, will come to sit on the throne of His glory. These are the reinforcements of God, and evil shall be no more,

and there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, and the confusion of the night shall have passed forever away. And this is the story of the angels on the first Christmas. These shining reserves of God are all about us. Let us watch that we are unembarrassed by their nearness, unabashed when they appear. They will come to us just at the moment when our faith is faltering, and they will come suddenly, and the glory of surprise will be hidden away in the song they sing, when the obscure morning lifts its gates to let in the Silver Day.

XIV

THE SURVIVAL OF THE UNSEEN

"Thy walls are continually before me."—ISAIAH 49:16.

THE most important question that comes up again and again for us to answer on this last day in the old year is, "What experiences of the departing year are going to survive into the next year?" Certainly the things that were seen by the inner eye will survive long after the pictures of sense have faded, and the songs which the soul heard will linger when the natural ear has forgotten the harsh songs of sound, and the glory of the unseen will go shining into the next year when the glamour of the seen is tarnished and tawdry. The experiences of the old year which survive into the new are the experiences that have passed through the eyes of the soul.

The prophet Isaiah in this text presents to us a parable of the Hebrew people. They were a captive nation in Babylon, the Magnificent, and Jerusalem was in ruins, wasted and decadent, yet Isaiah saw the glory of the Unseen City. He saw the walls rebuilt, the city rehabilitated, and his vision was the vision of the New Jerusalem. He could hear the rattle of the prisoner's chains that

bound his people while he spoke of a nation that should be free. He dwelt in the midst of a people desolate, discouraged and disconsolate, but his mind was fixed on the victorious Israel, and Israel's God. Israel needed this stalwart prophet to fling back to them this message to "Return," for during this more than fifty years Israel had grown into the habit of captivity and the indolence of despair.

Henceforth, faith should take the place of sight with them. The king had promised them the freedom to return and the prophet had thrilled them with the image of the new city. Henceforth, these toiling captives shall not be the children of despair; they shall not longer linger with the home-sickness of the exile, they shall now revel in the glory of the City Unseen; they shall henceforth dream of the fallen city rebuilt by hands invisible and divine. No more shall they hang their silent harps by night on the willows, but they shall live in the imagination of that choir invisible, whose music celestial would roll about the throne of the New Zion.

THE GLORY OF THE UNSEEN CITY

The message of this ancient text is the glory of seeing walls rise out of wreckage, the faith to project one's prayers and dreams into deeds and duties. The facts tell the story of walls fallen; faith tells the story of walls rebuilt. The dead weights of this age would crush us did not the soul of man live by faith. "After all," says Tertullian, "most of

mankind have seen God through visions." The best in revelation and the best in the world's achievement have come from the minds of men who dream. From the rapt Isaiah and the singing David and the vision-seeing Paul, have come the greatest secrets of God. These Jews were anxious to travel and toil on the journey over the deserts to Jerusalem, but the one thing necessary first of all, was the vision of confidence in the Builder of the walls. You and I have heard the fussy, wheezing, noisy gas engine as it turned the wheels of the coffee mill in the corner grocery, and yet how majestic was the impression of power that awed us as we looked upon some giant fly-wheel turning machinery of thirty thousand horsepower with no sound, no flurry, as with silent power it drove the water of the reservoirs to every home in the great city. Jesus never paid a finer tribute to the soul of man than when, under the stress of Satan's temptation, He spake that wonderful word, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." "Man is a heavenly plant," says Plato, "not earthly." The spirit of our age is the feverish fancy to be rich, to rise a step or two in the social scale, but after all is won that the heart has craved the pure soul of man sighs after God. The busy social worker, with his clubs and guilds and schemes and institutions, is certainly of great value to our age, but there is danger in the cry that we can make this

earth a heaven here and now, for this wall will never be done until man has learned to revel in the dreams of glory of that city whose foundation is laid and whose maker and builder is God. The glory of the Unseen Holy City gives to man the zest for toiling to make his own city holy.

A few years ago a friend of mine was talking with the richest man in Canada. After the business transaction was closed the sad-voiced Canadian said, "Mr. Stone, are you married?" "Yes," said Mr. Stone, "and why?" "Because," he said, "last week I buried my wife, but I lost her fifteen years ago. Fifteen years ago I made up my mind to be the richest man in Canada, and I have realized my dream, but I lost my wife, who was better than money. When I became so engrossed in business I forgot the best things, the little courtesies of home life, the quiet, thoughtful things which one who loves delights to do; I forgot to buy little presents for my wife; the song was silent in my life, and I was crowded with so many busy details that her heart was broken and her spirit was crushed. I buried her last week, but I lost her fifteen years ago. Mr. Stone, go back home and give your best love to your home." That is the story always at the end. One finds that "money is the universal provider of everything but happiness, and the universal passport to every place but Heaven."

When I go to the city of the silent dead, where

branches of palm lie trailing over the grave of my own dear mother, I know there's something in this life better than gold. I am dissatisfied with Babylon and its fine garments, its clatter and hurry, and prosperity and gaudy power, I sigh for the city whose walls are continually before me. Man's supreme quest is for happiness and Heaven and faith and truth and God. And we are restless creatures until we rest in Him.

To the religious sense of the Twentieth Century man, even as to the Jew of the captivity, the power of believing without seeing, and of living as actually possessing ideals unrealized, is the power that survives from the old year to the new, and from the mortal life to the eternal.

THE SPIRIT GROWS LARGE IN ITS DREAMS

To lose the power of dreaming of the unseen is to lose the power of acquiring anything in life worth the while. Faith is the eagerness of the heart yearning to possess its unseen goal. In the process of dreaming, of making one's way to the Unseen City, the soul learns to enlarge its vision. As these jaded and homesick sufferers scanned across the desert waste which separate them from Jerusalem, they saw not the city with eyes of sense; but with clear eyes of faith they could see it. In the process of transition, as faith transcends the material and earthly and natural to the spiritual and ideal, the soul of man enlarges; life holds in-

finite demands upon him; all men are at once his common brotherhood, and he rejoices in the majesty and sovereignty of the privilege of living. The crawling caterpillar, seeing but the path it pursues, has but a single unit of vision, but behold the metamorphosis into the butterfly of the summer fields. The butterfly has an eye of sixty thousand facets. It can see before, behind, upward, downward. And so the soul in its spiritual vision sees with amplified vision. Henceforth Jerusalem was to be the eternal city, the temple an everlasting house, waters were to flow from it, increasing in their daily tide of blessing, growing trees were to be on its banks, fructifying and refreshing all the land, and its leaves should be for the healing of the nation. The latter temple was to be the better temple; it was to see the glory of the Christ.

And thus the vision of the Unseen and spiritual values of life is transforming the nations come out of war. The hordes of pilgrims tracking the desolate waste cities are forever to be new men. Transfigured, transformed, rehabilitated, regenerated by the vision of the glory and heroism of life, they never will be the same again. The European War has opened the spiritual eyes of the nations to see the reality of a world brotherhood and an international kinship of men.

The price paid for this vision is unpurchasable. Do not let us think that the lessons which we learned this year were purchased lightly. No ideal,

no victory will ever be possessed until we have learned to suffer. Do not think this lesson cost God nothing. The purchase price is the penalty of a tear-wrung heart. The Jews had said: "Jehovah has forgotten, God has forsaken us," and Jehovah, wounded at the charge, cried: "Though a mother forsaketh her suckling child, yet will I not forsake thee." And the Jews had come up through much tribulation. They were a homeless, heartless nation before this new faith was born. They had paid dearly for the vision of the new Zion, and so all that is worth while in life and love and religion is brought with pain and passion. That beneficent word, "to bless," comes from a word meaning blood. "Sorrow is the great realizer," said Robertson, and Jean Paul has put this truth nobly in his sentence: "Wherever a great soul utters its thought, there is Golgotha." Through discipline and renunciation we lift the veil of fear from our faces to see the Unseen.

THE SURVIVAL VALUES OF SERVICE

The vision of the Unseen, once caught, lures us to forget our lives in service. Had the Jews in Babylon only seen the vision of the walls unbuilt, their vision would have been a vainglorious one. Had they beheld the glory of the Unseen City and failed to tramp and trudge the long, weary miles to Jerusalem to replace each fallen stone and to rebuild the wall, they were only visionary. It

is merely fanciful to dream and not to do. To have vision is to possess one's ideal and project one's self down the vistas of time unswervingly true to the vision yet unrealized and the ideal not yet wrought. "To wish and not to will is crime." To dream and not to do is sin. We can never achieve any more than what we are.

The year now drops its curtains and the practical duty of new achievement waits the new year at tomorrow's dawn. If you have had but a poor passion for Jesus Christ, the world's Saviour, the one serene figure midst the world's tragedies of the past year, I call you to a renewed consecration to Him and new services to men. Jesus Christ alone can fit the nations for their highest duties, and it is by serving Him that individuals will be enabled to lift up the stricken race, and if no other issue of the passing year is kept over into the new year except a saving glimpse of the beauteous face of the Nazarene, that glimpse will be the issue worth all our living.

Moses, in Midian, had a vision of the luxuriant land of Canaan to break upon his God-opened eyes, and he followed on until from Nebo's crest he saw it all lying before his mortal eyes. And David in his sheepcote marshaled his sheep in battalions like the armies of Israel at whose head he hoped some day to be. He sung his psalms to the untempled hills, as though he sung at the great feasts to the praise of Jehovah. Rapt Isaiah saw before he

spoke; Ezekiel preconstructed the temple rebuilt; and Zechariah saw a city in which boys and girls played in the streets thereof; and so all of them, these wise men of God, saw in ways mysteriously shrouded from our understanding, yet see they surely did, visions of God's plans and providences, and following these stars of vision, they so triumphed over the hearts and hopes of their times that each prophecy that they spoke was a finger-post guiding the next generation which should come trudging on to the cradle of the Christ.

Before we shall see the face of the Father there must be faith.

Before heaven, hope must rise and wing its way forever and forever onward until it rests on the bosom of God.

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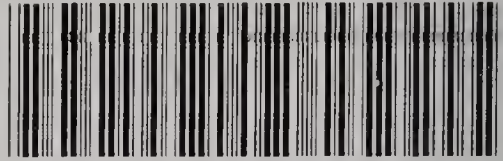
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